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JACK HARKAWAY'S TRIUMPH.



"One, two, three, and that's tokoi!" Down it came a terrific bang on the poor wretch's back. The thief gave a yell.
"That's only to open the ball, my friend," said Mole, cheerfully; "we shall
enjoy ourselves more presently."

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JACK HARKAWAY'S TRIUMPH.

CHAPTER I.

SHORT AND SWEET, BUT NECESSARY.

THE Franz Josef was back again.

As soon as she was in port they made their way to the British consul's house, and made an official report concerning the notorious pirate ship, the Flowery Land.

The consequence was that an expedition was got up to go in pursuit.

Once their business settled there, they made their way to Mr. Mole's property.

Judge then of their surprise when they discovered the calamity which had befallen the old tutor—poor Mole!

He was once more nursed by his faithful black partner with all her old tenderness.

And so it fell out that when they arrived he was walking about upon two wooden legs,

"Welcome all," said the old gentleman, with genuine joy. "My troubles are over now that I see you all here again; and believe me, I would have two more wooden legs, and go through even more suffering yet for the delight of having my own boy safe back with us—bless him!"

But the troubles and ugly adventures which they had gone through had this notable effect upon them.

They were tired of China.

"We will leave the Celestials to their own devices," said Harkaway, "as soon as Mr. Mole is fit to undertake a sea voyage."

Mole had a fancy in his head for routing out the gang with which Bigamini was in league.

CHAPTER II.

MOLE BAGS A BURGLAR—DISGRACETUL ROBBERY OF THE WOODEN LEG.

ISAAC MOLE stumped his way through life cheerfully enough on his pair of timber toes.

The only visible effect it had upon him was to cause him to grow spiteful at times.

And then he would vow vengeance upon Bigamini.

"I'm not a vicious man," he would often say, "but that wretch has condemned me to such a life of torment with my stilts, that if I wait till I'm a hundred, I'll have my vengeance upon him."

The two detectives, true to their old instincts, had ferreted out a number of particulars concerning Bigamini and his exploits.

Not only was that ruffian the spy of the pirates, but he was also connected with a villainous gang of thieves, who carried on their exploits in an underhand way with a secret organization that completely puzzled the native authorities.

They had their agents and spies everywhere, and it was soon evident that they must have them upon Mole's plantation.

The continual robberies which occurred, soon convinced the detectives of this.

Nabley communicated his suspicions to Isaac Mole, and the latter was on the watch night and day from that moment.

By degrees, however, he got the better of his nervous feeling, and Mrs. Mole began to get a fair night's rest.

One night, however, just three weeks after the return of the Harkaway party, Isaac Mole started up in the middle of the night, and snatching his revolver, hobbled off on his rounds. His wife vainly endeavored to dissuade him.

Now Mr. Mole would fain have aroused his friends generally, but the fact was that he had cried "wolf" so often, that they would not pay any heed to him now.

Chloe tried to coax him into going back to bed again. But tried in vain.

Down he hobbled into the grounds, nothing on but his dressing gown.

Now he had not proceeded far when he saw in the dim night light a figure crouching by the back door of his house.

"Halloo!" thought Mole, "I've got him, have I?"

What could he be doing in this position?

"Evidently trying the locks," thought Mole.

"I'll just go back quickly," he said to himself, "and wait till John Chinaman opens the door, and then meet him inside with my six-shooter."

So full of glee was he at the notion that he could scarce refrain from chuckling aloud.

Back he crept around the house and into the room, straight up to the door upon the outside of which the midnight burglar was operating.

Now, what was his surprise when he got there, to find that the thief had drilled a hole on each side of the door large enough to get his hands through.

And there were his two hands groping about for the fastenings.

Mr. Mole was seized with a brilliant idea.

So grand that he could scarce carry it into execution for laughing.

He looked about him for a rope, and having secured a good stout one, he hastily made a running noose at each end of it.

This done, he slowly approached the two hands, held the pair of nooses over them, and then with a sudden jerk tightened them.

"Bagged!" he cried; "bagged by the everlasting jingo!"

He dragged at the poor wretch's wrists with no gentle hand, and a groan of anguish came through the door.

"Now," said Mr. Mole, "I must administer to you."

Around the house he trotted, and reaching the exterior, found his prisoner writhing ineffectually to release himself from these novel stocks.

"I've been waiting for you a long while, my friend," said Mole; "and now as I'm a sinner, I'll enjoy myself on your carcass."

He looked for a stick.

But there was nothing to hand.

A happy thought.

He had two wooden legs; one would suffice for his present enjoyment.

So he hurriedly unscrewed it and prepared for the fray.

"This is most enjoyable," he said to himself.

Then he poised his wooden leg gracefully in his hand.

"One, two, three, and that's tokol!"

Down it came a terrific bang on the poor wretch's back. The thief gave a yell.

"That's only to open the ball, my friend," said Mole, cheerfully; "we shall enjoy ourselves more presently."

Crack!

"Chin-chin," said Mole, pleasantly, "how does that style suit you?"

Bang—bang!

It was something to hear him yell.

"Now, my dear friend," said Mr. Mole, pausing for a moment to take breath, "we have had the plain, straightforward hitting. I'm going in for a few fancy touches."

Saying which, he prodded his prisoner desperately in the ribs.

He writhed and yelled and shrieked.

And the more he cried, the more Mr. Mole laughed.

"Dear—dear!" he cried, "what an evening I'm having, to be sure—and all to myself."

Whiz—crack!

He played a little wildly now, and landed an awful blow on his prisoner's head.

"Dear—dear, that won't do," he said. "I shall knock him out of time and spoil it before I've had half my penn'orth out of him."

Crack!

"Mercy!"

"Halloo!" said Mole, starting, or rather hopping back in surprise, "English!"

Just then he heard the voice of Harkaway, Dick Harvey, and others calling him.

"Mr. Mole—Mr. Mole!"

"All right," he shouted, "here I am."

But finding that they did not arrive very quickly, he hopped after them.

"Why, what in the name of all that's wonderful, is the meaning of this?" asked Jefferson.

"I've bagged a burglar," returned Mole.

"You have had the nightmare."

"Not I," answered Mole, with a chuckle.

"I thought I should surprise you; come with me."

He took Harvey by the arm for support.

Now, just as they turned the corner, they perceived a number of dark forms stealing away across the plantation, and all that remained in evidence of Mr. Mole's prisoner, was the ends of the rope.

"Well," ejaculated Mr. Mole, "he has got away. But he had such a dose of my wooden leg that I don't think he could go far."

"Your leg?"

"Where is it?"

"Don't you see? He had made those holes to reach the iron bars on the inside, and there I caught him and held him, too, and then I came round to give him a token of my gratitude, and having no stick handy, I unscrewed one of my legs, and I enjoyed myself; in fact, if I hadn't left to show you the way, I should probably be still at work on him."

They laughed at this.

"They have carried him off."

"Of course; I knew he couldn't walk; I spoilt him for that. But what startled me was that he called for mercy in English."

"I shouldn't be surprised to find it was Bigamini again."

"Well, I lost a leg when last I tackled the scoundrel Bigamini, and now I've lost one again."

And although they scoured the country round not a trace could they find of the thieves or of Mole's wooden leg.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH MR. MOLE PLEDGES HIMSELF TO TOTAL ABSTINENCE FROM ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS.

ISAAC MOLE soon had another leg made for him, and he stumped through the tea plantation, gloating over his late attack on the midnight burglar.

Up one path and down another he perambulated among the tea plants in a most nimble and—bearing in mind that he had a pair of wooden legs—wonderful manner.

"What a fortunate fellow I am," he soliloquized, "to have dropped into this plantation. It will be a fortune to me if I look carefully after it, which I most decidedly intend to do. Oh, yes, I'll look after it! It will be something to leave Mrs. Mole and the chicks—if we have any—when I depart this life."

He paused and took his twentieth pull at his rum flask.

"Delicious thing, rum!" he murmured, as he contemplated the flask affectionately. "Very delicious, and suits my constitution so admirably—hic—so admirably!"

He stumped on a little further, and then stopped again.

"What a fine sight a rum plantation would be!" he exclaimed suddenly in a rapturous manner; "fancy rum bottles full of old Jamaica all ready corked and sealed, growing in rows like these tea shrubs. Wouldn't it be glorious? Yes, it—hic—would be; he, he! decidedly—hic—glorious!"

Another suck at the rum flask, and another after that.

His wooden legs forgot themselves on several occasions, and seemed inclined to play strange tricks.

Wandering out of the path, and burying themselves every now and then deep in the mold in an extremely inconvenient manner for their owner.

"After all!" he exclaimed, as he extricated his wooden members from the soil for the fifth time, and nearly fell on his back in the effort, "wooden legs, however admirably constructed, are not to be compared with the natural limbs. Oh, dear, no!"

He stood looking down at the end of one stump, and continued meditatively:

"That round knob is all very well in its way, but it isn't a foot—no—any more than a foot is a yard—hic!"

Mr. Mole's eyes were by this time decidedly rummy in their expression.

They rolled in his head, and had a vacant and dreamy aspect.

He tried to progress but in vain.

His wooden legs grew more unruly than ever, making the worthy gentleman stagger in a most perilous manner from one side of the path to the other.

"Halloo—halloo! steady, Mole—hic—steady, old boy!" he hiccupped.

But this friendly caution from himself was of little avail.

He staggered more than ever.

It was pretty evident the man was getting what is commonly called tight.

Not that he seemed to have the smallest suspicion of any such thing.

"Not so young as I used to be."

"Can't imagine—hic—what can have taken

such—hic—singular effect upon me," he murmured.

He gave a lurch as he spoke, but recovered himself.

Only dropping his pipe, which shivered into atoms.

"I think I'll have—hic—snooze in the pavil—" He attempted to take a step forward, but the attempt was perfectly futile.

He reeled, hiccupped, and finally he and his rum bottle descended into one of the soft tea beds.

Having reached this stage, he became quite maudlin.

"I say, old Mole," he said, "I am afraid, old fellow, you are getting tight."

Then he shouted:

"For he's a jolly good feller—hic!
And so say all—hic—us."

Having accomplished this in a very disconnected and broken manner, he immediately fell asleep.

He had not slept long, when, as chance would have it, young Jack Harkaway came up to the spot.

The pupil contemplated his venerable instructor, and at once comprehended the state of affairs.

"Tight again," he remarked, briefly, as he shrugged his shoulders.

And then at once applied himself to the attempt to bring his erring master to his senses.

The means he used were all excellent in their way.

He pinched his nose till it was ruddier than the cherry.

He tickled his nostrils with a peculiar species of Chinese bramble supposed to be wonderfully efficacious in producing an irritating sensation.

He pulled his hair vigorously.

This not proving successful, he administered a few gentle kicks in the ribs.

After which he grasped his venerable tutor's wooden legs, and wrenched them energetically, as he would have done pump handles.

But neither pinching, tickling, pulling, nor pumping produced any effect whatever.

The great Isaac would not be aroused.

Finding it, therefore, a hopeless case, he hurried off to his father.

"Oh, dad!" he exclaimed, as he rushed into the room; "such a lark."

"What lark?" inquired his parent.

"Here's old Mole lying drunk and incapable in his tea plantation."

"Do you call that a lark, sir?" asked his father, trying to look serious, but feeling at the same time rather inclined to smile.

"Well, perhaps not," admitted our hero.

"I should rather call it very disgraceful on Mr. Mole's part," continued Mr. Harkaway.

"So it is, certainly," admitted young Jack; "that's what I meant, and I thought we might have a lark with him, to teach him a lesson in future."

"No—no, my boy," said his father; "it's not good to make the vice of drunkenness a theme for larks."

"Well, but what's to be done with him, dad?" asked Jack; "I've tried to wake him up, but I can't."

"The best thing you can do is to go and fetch his wife."

Away ran Jack.

In an incredibly short space of time, Mrs. Mole might have been seen hurrying eagerly to the spot, her dark eyes flashing with indignation.

In her hand she held one of China's choicest, and in this case most useful productions—a bamboo cane.

"Me teach him sometink," she exclaimed, angrily; "me let him know it not right to drink till him knock off him legs."

In a very short time she reached the spot where the unconscious Mole still slumbered profoundly, instinctively grasping his rum flask even in sleep.

"Oh, you bad man—you bad, wicked man!" she exclaimed at length; "dis de way you keep your word wid me, is it?"

No answer was returned.

"Didn't you promise me you not get drunk nebber no more, eh, sar? What you got to say for yourself, eh?"

The inebriate husband in reply uttered a snore that sounded like the passage of air through a choked gaspipe.

"Don't make dat drefful noise, but answer me what I ask you, sar!" exclaimed the indignant Chloe, angrily, as she flourished the bamboo over her spouse.

The latter gave her no response, save that he

made another "drefful noise" with his nasal apparatus.

This brought the anger of his better half to a climax.

And grasping the cane with determination, she brought it down upon her husband's body with the utmost intensity.

Whack—whack—whack! swish—swish—swish! it went on his ribs, and in the adjoining localities, but the votary of the rum flask still slumbered and snored on.

"What am I to do wid him?" soliloquised his despairing wife. "He no mind my words; he no mind my cane; he do mind notink; what shall I do?"

"I know what," exclaimed a voice near at hand.

Looking up, she saw a party approaching.

This party consisted of young Jack, Mr. Harkaway, and Dick Harvey.

"If I were you, Mrs. Mole," said Harkaway, "I should get your husband home to bed as quickly as possible."

"Home to bed!" echoed Mrs. Mole, excitedly; "how me get him dere, when he can't walk on his wooden legs?"

"It is awkward, certainly," Harkaway said.

"I know what we must do, dad," remarked young Jack, suddenly.

"What?" asked his father.

"We must water him," returned our hero in a very decided tone.

"Water him, Massa Jack?" echoed Mrs. Mole.

"What you water him wid?"

"With a—with a garden engine," continued the youthful counsellor; "capital thing to bring people to their senses when they've had too much to drink."

"Am it, though?"

"Oh, yes; the water penetrates the pores of the skin, mixes with the spirit and destroys its power, and the drinker comes to his senses."

"Oh, do try de water, Massa Jack, please."

Our hero wanted no persuasion.

He was quite ready to perform the diluting process.

Accordingly he hurried away to where a garden engine stood that was used in watering the tea shrubs.

With this useful and effective instrument he played upon the body of his unconscious tutor until every thread of his garments was thoroughly drenched.

Mole turned on his side and mumbled out:

"A little more rum, please."

Still he did not revive.

Under these circumstances no other alternative remained but to carry him home.

A kind of stretcher, formed of bamboo canes, was hastily put together, and on this the victim of intemperance was lifted and carried to his apartments.

It was not till breakfast time the next morning that Mr. Isaac hobbled somewhat sheepishly into the breakfast room.

The party were all assembled there.

Mrs. Mole presided at the breakfast table.

John Harkaway looked at his quondam tutor as he entered with becoming sternness.

Dick Harvey also threw a reproachful expression into his features.

Young Jack, not to be behind-hand, knitted his brows and evinced as much quiet disgust as possible.

Chloe looked at her spouse with a kind of subdued ferocity that seemed to imply what she would have done if she could.

Mr. Isaac Mole had a sort of inward conviction that something was wrong.

He had, moreover, distressing sensations of nausea and a splitting headache.

He approached the table and sank into a chair.

"Good morning, my friends!" he murmured, as he passed his hands over his throbbing forehead.

"Good morning, sir," returned Harkaway, senior, freezingly.

"Good morning, sir," echoed the rest, in ominous tones.

Then followed a dead silence, during which the victim of the rum flask looked wistfully at the tea-pot.

"I—a—think, my love," he said, at length, to his spouse, humbly, "I'll take a cup of tea, if you please. I don't feel very well this morning; it must be the weather."

Mrs. Mole looked anything but pleased, but she poured him out a cup of tea.

"Ah!" he sighed, after taking a prolonged sip, "delicious beverage, tea! So invigorating, so refreshing."

"I should think you must find its invigorating properties particularly serviceable this morning,

Mr. Mole," remarked John Harkaway, senior, sarcastically to him across the table.

"Well, ya-es, my dear John; perhaps I do," admitted the tutor; "my head is very heavy this morning."

"No wonder, either, after your proceedings of yesterday."

"My proceedings of yesterday?" echoed Isaac, obliviously. "Let me see; what did I do yesterday?"

"What did you do?" answered Harkaway.

"Why, you drank yourself into a state of intoxication, and were found in a most disgraceful condition in your own plantation."

Mr. Mole turned up his eyes, either with real or affected horror.

"My dear John, you don't mean to say this?" he exclaimed, faintly. "You really don't mean to assert that I was—a—found in—a—a—state of—a—"

The worthy man's voice died away and became inaudible.

"It's a melancholy fact," accredited Dick Harvey, with a solemn shake of his head.

"That it is," joined in young Jack, shrugging his shoulders in harmony with the rest; "I fired away at you with the garden engine for ever so long, and it didn't take any other effect on you than make you call for more rum."

"You wicked, good-for-nothing, disobedient man!" joined in Chloe, "what tink become ob you—eh?"

Mr. Mole did not seem to have any very distinct ideas on the subject.

In fact, his perceptive powers just then appeared to be in a fog.

He murmured something not very comprehensive, and passed his cup for more tea.

He could see from the manner of his friends that he had committed himself seriously in their estimation, and he felt very uncomfortable in consequence.

Harkaway spoke again.

"I think, Mr. Mole, at your time of life, it is your bounden duty to be more guarded in the quantities you drink."

"You are quite right, my dear John; quite right," admitted the guilty one; "my conduct is unpardonable, but I'll alter it; I will indeed. The fact is, I suppose I'm not so strong as I was, and the spirit takes more effect upon me on that account."

"You ought nebber touch spirits no more!" exclaimed Mrs. Mole to her husband, indignantly; "dey no good to you."

"I think the same," joined in Harkaway, "and if you would be advised by me, you would become a total abstainer from this moment."

Mr. Mole became suddenly contemplative.

He seemed to be forming some grand resolution.

At length, his mind being fixed, he rose to his feet, or rather to his timber, and exclaimed, oratorically:

"Yes; I've decided! Isaac Mole, thou hast triumphed over thy natural weakness; henceforth farewell to alcohol and welcome the pump!"

"Bravo—bravo!" murmured his listeners.

Chloe also seemed highly gratified.

"You nebber drink no more rum, Isaac?" she said to him appealingly, as she grasped him by the hand.

"Never, my beloved; never—never—never!" returned the virtuously repentant husband, fervently. "From this moment to the end of my existence, I shall devote myself to that cheering but harmless beverage, tea."

"Tea?" cried young Jack.

"Yes," said Mole; "nothing but what we can get from tea."

This laudable resolution was warmly applauded by Harkaway and the rest, and in the light of his praiseworthy determination, Mr. Mole produced paper, pens, and ink, and drew up a solemn protest of future sobriety and devotion to the tea shrub.

This he signed in the presence of witnesses who attested his signature.

No man in the world henceforth would be more temperate than Isaac Mole.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. MOLE BREAKS HIS PLEDGE AND RECEIVES AN AWFUL VISITATION IN CONSEQUENCE.

FOR some time all went well.

At least as well as could be expected.

The Harkaways were anxious to be off to Greece; but Spirillo had been attacked with a severe illness, and was unable to move.

Without him it would be useless to attempt to find the treasure.

However, he was well attended by the old

American doctor, who promised that he should soon be well.

The worthy tutor adhered to his teetotal resolution with heroic firmness.

Occupied with his tea plantation, he seemed to have forgotten that such a thing as old Jamaica existed.

But this was not to last.

Isaac had been so long accustomed to his drops of rum that he began to feel the want of his usual stimulant.

He became rather low-spirited over his abstinence. His limbs grew shaky.

As for his wooden legs, he couldn't manage them at all.

"This won't do," he said to himself one day as he sat alone. "I'm getting quite nervous and dyspeptic."

He got up, and having nothing else to fly to, he took a pull at a tea-pot which he always kept ready at hand.

"Very nice and refreshing, I dare say, for some people," he remarked, with a vehement shudder; "but I really don't think Pekeo suits my constitution. I feel as wishy washy as a water butt, and as shaky as an old woman. It's very awkward, too," he continued; "I've taken the pledge. Signed and sealed in the presence of witnesses a vow of abstinence from all ardent spirits. Oh, dear—dear! it's very awkward, I must break my vow! No! rather will I die a martyr to pump water and tea leaves."

With a sigh of resignation the virtuous Isaac reseated himself, and filling his pipe, tried to banish his inward sensations by the soothing influence of tobacco.

Just at that moment a packet of letters arrived from England.

Amongst them a newspaper for Mr. Mole.

The desponding tutor received it with avidity, and eagerly tore it open.

He had not read far, when suddenly he uttered a vehement exclamation and stopped.

An announcement had caught his eye, and quite riveted his attention.

This was:

"Robur, spirit of tea."

The orbs of the worthy tutor dilated at this announcement.

And beginning to peruse the advertisement, he read:

"Robur is a pure spirit, free from essential oil."

"That would do for me exactly, I think," he muttered, hopefully, and then went on:

"Robur, though not intoxicating, possesses great stimulating powers."

"That's the very thing."

In his excitement he started up, and seized his hat.

"I sha'n't be breaking my vow, either," he soliloquized. "I pledged myself to stick to tea, and robur is tea—the pure spirit of tea. What better cordial could I take?"

Away went Mr. Mole, straight to one of the quays.

There he found an English vessel, and to his great joy, a quantity of robur amongst her cargo.

The delighted Isaac purchased a large quantity.

Having seen it safely deposited, he, as the evening drew on, made preparations for a little quiet festivity all to himself.

The scene of this harmless conviviality was to be a pavilion which Mr. Mole had built in his grounds, as a kind of private study.

Here then he conveyed a sufficient quantity of the spirit of tea, with hot water and sugar, pipes and tobacco, and having locked himself in, proposed to enjoy himself.

Having uncorked a bottle, he mixed himself a glass of the spirits.

"I'll drink my own good health," he said with a complacent smile, as he raised the glass to his lips, and took a good swig.

"It's queer stuff to taste!" he murmured, making a wry face, "decidedly queer. It's very warming to the stomach, though."

And began to persuade himself that robur was a very excellent beverage.

Anyhow, it warmed him, and its stimulating qualities began to tell upon him agreeably.

"I'm beginning to feel quite myself again," he said to himself, "quite; another glass or two and Mole will be himself again."

Leaving the worthy to concoct his other glass, let us now adjourn to the outside of the pavilion, to a spot where young Jack Harkaway was quietly taking stock of the unconscious Mole.

Our hero had observed that his tutor on that particular evening had made several mysterious journeys to and fro from his house to the pavilion.

These facts were sufficient to arouse Master Jack's suspicions.

"Something's up, I know," he said to himself; "the question is—what?"

This he was not very long arriving at.

Under the influence of several glasses of the stimulant, Mr. Mole began to talk to himself in a glowing and fervid strain.

Then growing more convivial, he became also poetical, and sang extempore:

"Delectable Robur! Spirit of Tea!

Oh, what a boon to weak mortals like me;

I thought not long since with me 'twas all over,

But I'm quite put to rights by this exquisite Robur!

Beautiful Robur! exquisite Robur!

I'm quite put to rights by this exquisite Robur!"

Young Jack, never having heard of this delicious compound, was rather puzzled to know what its virtues consisted of.

But presently, when he observed his venerable tutor start up and plunge headlong into stumping the "Sailors' Hornpipe," whistling his own music, he began to suspect the truth.

"I see what it is," he said to himself; "it's some Chinese spirit he's got hold of, and as he's pledged himself not to drink rum, I suppose he's doing his best to get tight on this—what does he call it?—robur; yes, that's it."

Mr. Mole, having finished his hornpipe, sat down again and applied himself once more to his libations.

So diligently did he fill and refill, that in less than an hour he had reached the desired point.

He was once more completely intoxicated.

"Who cares—hic—for anybody?" he hiccupped. "I don't; I don't care for Mrs. Mole, not I—hic! Bother Mrs. Mole! who's she, I should like—know? Ugly black—hic—woolly-haired female! I'll go to bed; no one can disturb me here!"

As he spoke, he staggered to a couch, which he had fitted up in the pavilion, and fell asleep, singing in a maudlin tone:

"Beau'ful Robur—beau'ful Robur!

Quite—hic—put—rights—beau'ful Robur!"

Jack's determination was quickly formed.

"I'll cure you of this, Mr. Mole, if I can," he said to himself.

He at once went in search of Sunday and Monday.

He was not long in finding them.

"Come along with me," he said; "I'm going to play old Mole a trick, and I want you to help me."

"Golly, Massa Jack, we help you," they exclaimed, eagerly; "what we do?"

"Go first and get two sheets and two white nightcaps and some chalk, and meet me at the pavilion. I'll explain what you're to do then."

Away went the niggers to collect these necessities, chuckling over the prospect of the forthcoming fun.

In the meantime, young Jack made a collection of such articles as he required for the carrying out of his project.

In a short time they met outside the pavilion.

Here our hero distinctly explained to his sable companions what he wished them to do.

The shades of evening had fallen.

A cool, gentle breeze, laden with fragrance, swept over the garden.

Not very far from the pavilion there was a large tank.

This tank supplied the water necessary for irrigating the tea shrubs, and was quite full.

A rather broad plank was placed, by Jack's direction, with one end resting on the ground and the other overhanging the edge of the tank, so that anyone walking up this plank, it would, when they reached the extremity, tilt over, and precipitate them into the water beneath.

"Golly! what dat for?" asked the darkies, with natural curiosity.

"That's the cold water bath into which Mr. Isaac Mole will be lured by the specters of his deceased wives," said young Jack, grinning.

Our hero then led the way to the pavilion.

"Now, then, my boys," he said to his companions, "dress yourselves up in your sheets and nightcaps, chalk your faces, and make yourselves as ghastly as you possibly can."

"Cert'nly, Massa Jack. We make ourselves drefful frights in 'bout two minutes," they replied.

Whilst Sunday and Monday were bringing themselves up to a proper state of ghastliness, our hero very quietly opened the window and clambered into the pavilion.

All within was perfectly dark.

Feeling his way to the table, Jack at length came upon the lamp.

This he kindled, but kept it turned down low lest he should awaken the sleeper.

There lay Mr. Mole on his back, with his wooden legs sticking up in the air like a pair of sign posts.

Having completed this brief examination, our hero proceeded to business.

First he grasped the nearest wooden leg, and pulled it from a perpendicular to a horizontal position.

He then, with a small center-bit, bored a large hole in the end of the wooden member till it was quite hollow.

This he filled tightly with gunpowder.

He then tied a squib close upon it.

These arrangements being completed, he opened the door and admitted Sunday and Monday, who looked hideously ghostly in their white sheets.

"What we do now?" they asked.

"Wait a moment, and I'll show you," answered their youthful director.

As he spoke he emptied some yellowish powder in a long line on the floor, and then a similar stream of powder of a darkish green.

Into each of these he placed a piece of quick match.

"That's for the 'ghost effects,'" said our hero, with a smile.

The last operation our hero performed was to smear a quantity of phosphorus over the prominent parts of the darkies' features.

Then lowering the lamp, till the interior of the pavilion was in profound obscurity, he placed Sunday and Monday at the foot of the couch behind the curtains, and told them to wait there till he gave the signal.

He then crouched down himself out of sight, armed with his matches and everything necessary, and waited.

After a time, Mr. Mole's timepiece struck eleven.

The effects of the robur were beginning to wear off.

Isaac Mole began to grow restless.

He left off snoring and took to grunting and groaning.

"Water—water!" he gasped.

Young Jack crept quietly to a sideboard, and possessing himself of the water-jug, crept back, and gave his tutor a good drenching.

Mr. Mole almost shrieked at the cold water application.

"Who is it? What is it?" he called out; "is anybody ill?"

Awfully deep groans answered him.

"Good gracious! what's the matter?—where am I?" he faltered, as he pulled himself up to a sitting posture, and looked out into the darkness.

Profound silence reigned around.

"Anybody there?" Mr. Mole asked, tremulously.

"Oh—oh—oh!" answered an awfully deep voice.

"Oh—oh—oh!" echoed another voice of equal profundity.

The tutor began to feel his hair bristle slightly, as he cried:

"Oh—oh—oh!"

"Isaac Mole—Isaac Mole!" continued the first voice.

"Isaac Mole—Isaac Mole!" repeated the second.

"Who are you? What do you want? Isaac Mole's gone out," faintly gurgled the preceptor.

"We am de'sperits ob you unhappy wives."

"I've got no wife but one," cried the alarmed Mole; "I'll take my oath I haven't!"

"Don't tell none ob you wicked lies, you base deceiver!" replied Sunday and Monday, imitating the feminine tone as closely as possible; "you know you got two oder wives."

"Where—where are they now?" groaned Mole, nervously.

"Here we am," exclaimed two deeply solemn voices from the foot of the couch. "Isaac Mole, look at us, you gay deceiver."

Isaac Mole heard the voices, and looked toward the spot whence they proceeded.

Gradually, as he looked, two ghostly white figures glided from behind the drapery, and stood before the scared Isaac.

Their faces were of a ghastly grey hue, and their features shone with a blazing phosphoric light.

The jaws of the venerable Isaac began to chatter.

There was no doubt he was gazing upon a supernatural visitation.

It must be his deceased wives come to pay him a visit.

"What do you want, my dear loves?" he asked, in trembling accents, every particular hair in his head standing bolt upright with horror.

"We are here to warn you, Isaac Mole," replied the dear loves, in awfully hollow tones.

"Warn me of what?" Isaac inquired, his teeth rattling like a pair of castanets.

"Of your approaching doom."

"My approaching doom?" echoed Mole, in a tone of horrible incredulity.

"We tell you your doom is fixed," replied Monday; "you come to jine us in de world ob sperrits."

"But, my dear loves, I don't wish to join you in the land of spirits."

At that moment the ghostly figures seemed as though they would have clutched poor Mole.

"Get out!" roared the bewildered Mole; "I'm not going with you. I'm in robust health, and intend to live fifty years longer. Go away, I command you, and don't annoy me any longer."

The specters laughed mockingly.

"Ha—ha—ha! your hours am numbered, Isaac Mole; you have not twelve hours to live."

At this terrible announcement Mole sat upright in his bed.

"You pair of ugly frights, I don't believe you," he roared. "Why shouldn't I live—what's the matter with me? I'm still young."

"You've destroyed your constitution wid rum," answered the specters. "You go off all ob a sudden wid spontaneous combustion. You go pop, and your ugly head go off."

"It sha'n't, I tell you," roared Mole, who was in a cold sweat with terror; "I've turned teetotler. There isn't a drop of spirit left in me."

Ho—ho—ho!" laughed the spectres in a hollow, ironical tone; "you all spirit; see!"

As they spoke, one of the specters glided to the foot of the couch and placed its ghastly finger on the tutor's wooden leg.

A slight fizz was heard.

And a bright shower of sparks poured out from the end of the wooden member.

Isaac Mole fell back aghast on the couch.

"Mercy on me!" he shrieked loudly; "murder! fire! Mur-ur-ur-der!"

Then followed a tremendous bang.

The interior of the pavilion was lighted up with a bright, ghastly blue glare.

The tutor could see that his wooden leg was completely shattered.

"Oh, my poor leg! I'm a dead man," he groaned.

"Isaac Mole, Isaac Mole, follow us!" cried the specters.

"I—I can't," he returned; "my leg's shivered into atoms. I can't walk without my leg."

"Then hop!" shouted the remorseless ghosts.

A bright green light now illumined the interior with ghastly distinctness.

"Are you coming?" demanded the specters, imperiously. "If you don't, we shall—"

They made a step forward, but Isaac Mole, in an agony of terror, sprang from the bed.

"I'll try," he exclaimed. "What way am I to go?"

"Follow me," cried Monday, still imitating his late wife's voice, as he stalked away.

The hapless Mole caught up a broom that was near him, and placing the brush part under his arm for a crutch, hopped after the supposed spirit as well as he could, puffing and grunting in much perturbation of mind.

Monday, in his ghostly garb, led the way into the garden toward the tank.

The preceptor followed.

Hop—hop—hop—hop.

Up the plank Monday glided.

"I can't go up there," gasped Mr. Mole.

"You must. We, the departed spirits of your loving wives, command you. Come on."

The distracted Mole paused a moment.

One of the specters had sprung nimbly across the tank, and was now beckoning him from the other side.

"Come on," it cried.

Young Jack, who had crept closely behind his tutor, now affixed a couple of squibs to his collar, and ignited them.

"Follow me!" commanded the spirit.

At this moment, whizz went both the squibs.

With a yell of terror, Isaac Mole, with his broom and wooden leg, hopped up the plank.

Just as he reached the end, both the fireworks exploded with a loud bang.

Up went the plank, and head first into the tank plunged Mole, with a shriek and a splash, where he lay floundering and imbibing the liquid element, fully convinced his last hour had come.

"Halloo—halloo! What's the matter here?" cried young Jack, in a tone of surprise, as though he had just reached the spot.

"Who is it?" he asked, as he looked over the edge of the tank.

"Oh, my dear Jack, it's me. Save me, dear boy; I'm drowning!" gasped the victim.

"What, Mr. Mole!" ejaculated our hero. "So it is, I declare. Here, Sunday—Monday, come and help my worthy tutor."

Sunday and Monday, who had in the mean-

time removed their ghostly garments, and wiped the chalk from their faces, came running up, and speedily extricated Mr. Mole from his unpleasant predicament.

"Oh, dear Mr. Mole, how dis happen to you, sar?" said Monday. But Mr. Mole made no reply.

Then, after drying the worthy gentleman, they put him to bed.

He awoke next day, rather scared with the terrors of the preceding night, and declared he would never sleep in the haunted room again.

But the lesson did him some good, inasmuch as he never from that moment tasted another drop of the delectable robur, the spirit of tea.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH MR. MOLE RECEIVES AN INVITATION TO DINNER FROM TWO ILLUSTRIOUS CHINESE.

"Hi, Sunday! Monday."

"What you want, Massa Jack?"

"I've just got a splendid idea."

"Hab you though? Keap it den, Massa Jack, you may want it some day."

"Yes, but this is first-rate, and will do for Mole."

"What is it?"

The eyes of the niggers glistened at the prospect.

"Am it as big a lark as de ghosts ob Massa Mole's wives, Massa Jack?" they asked.

"Quite as big," returned our hero with a grin.

"I don't know whether it isn't bigger, if anything, only it's of a different kind."

"Tell us what it is, please," entreated the darkies, eagerly.

"Well, this is it. You remember some time ago Mr. Mole painting both your faces on one side?"

"Golly, yes; um remember that puffedly," responded the niggers with a somewhat rueful grin; "um nebber forget it, um got de glue in um wool now; it nebber come out of dis child's hair."

"Well, then Mr. Mole painted and put glue on your hair for his amusement."

"S'pose him did."

"And now I want you to paint yourselves for your own."

At this proposition, Sunday scratched his woolly head, and looked inquiringly at his comrade.

Monday also looked in a similar manner at him, and performed a similar operation.

"Excuse me, Massa Jack," said the former; "dis child don't exactly see de 'musement ob painting him face."

"No more do I, neider," joined in Monday; "it took all de skin off him countin' house de last time um washed it off."

Young Jack laughed.

"You wouldn't have to use oil color this time," he said; "it would come off easily enough."

"Well, but what de good ob it?" asked the darkies.

"As I told you, to play Mr. Mole a trick."

"What trick?"

"I want you to paint your faces, and put on the dresses of two of the native Chinese."

"Iss, Massa Jack."

"Then you come and present yourselves at the gate of Mr. Mole's domicile, and desire to see him."

"Iss, and what den?"

"You know what a conceited old fellow my tutor is?"

"Dat bery true, Massa Jack; him don't tink small beer ob himself."

"Well, you'll give yourselves out to be two people of consequence—two mandarins."

"Ah, yes; two mannikins."

"No—no, mandarins."

"Beg him pardon, mandarins; and what we do den?"

"You'll make out that the fame of Mr. Isaac Mole has reached you, and that you have come to feast your eyes upon that wonderful individual."

"Yes—yes; we understand dat."

"Well, then, you know you can invite him to dinner."

"Where we get de dinner, Massa Jack?" inquired the niggers in one breath.

"There'll be none, of course. Don't you see? You'll ask Mr. Mole to visit you at an imaginary place, to feast upon a phantom dinner."

"Ha—ha! golly, dat good!" grinned the darkies; "Massa Mole come find no house, no grub, no rum, no notink."

"Exactly."

"But he not take us for Chinese," remarked Monday, doubtfully.

"I shall disguise you," returned Jack.

"What we do for pigtales?" inquired Sunday.

"I'll manage all that," said our hero.

"But, Massa Jack," exclaimed Monday, all of a sudden, looking very blank, "dere one drefful licker."

"What's that?"

"Why, we are not able to speak word Chinese."

"Never mind, use any crack-jaw words you think of just to start with. He'll never know the difference, and then he'll be very glad to find that you speak English."

"All right, Massa Jack," exclaimed Monday and Sunday.

It took all the rest of the day to get the native costumes and sundry necessary properties from Chang's stores.

Our hero having arranged these preliminary matters, gave his sable pupils a good drilling.

Sunday and Monday proved apt scholars, and before they retired for the night, young Jack had taught them to perform their *kotou** in a most perfect and natural manner.

* * * * *

The worthy Isaac was shaving himself the next morning, when his hopeful pupil entered the room in a well-assumed state of excitement.

"Oh, I'm so glad you're up," said the latter, eagerly, "for two Chinese gentlemen are waiting to see you."

"Two Chinese gentlemen," echoed Mr. Mole, opening his eyes widely.

"Yes, and they seem to me to be of high rank."

"High rank!" gasped Mr. Mole, becoming at once nervously excited.

"Yes, and I fancy it's something particular, they seemed so anxious to see you. You'd better get dressed as quickly as possible."

"Yes—yes, I will," said Mr. Mole.

And then in his agitation he plunged into a series of wildest extravagance.

He put on his trousers the wrong way, and tried to button his waistcoat up his back.

He combed his hair with the brush.

He brushed his hair with the comb.

His wooden legs also gave him a great deal of trouble, refusing obstinately to allow themselves to be screwed into their sockets.

At length, however, with Jack's assistance, his toilet was finished.

On entering, he perceived two splendid-looking Chinese.

Their complexions were of a hue something between yellow ochre and coffee grits.

They had closely-shaven heads, and magnificent pigtales.

Not the least suspicion of any trick crossed Mole's imagination.

He bowed his head, and placed his hands to his forehead in a token of respect.

The strangers returned his salutation, and Monday exclaimed, in queer Chinese:

"Hoon, tsing—tsing!" (Are you well? Hail—hail!)

"Delighted to see you, gentlemen," answered Mr. Mole. "Pray, may I request to know to what I am indebted for the honor of this visit?"

"We hear much talkee of you, Misser Mole," replied Sunday, condescendingly.

"Yes," joined in Monday, "dey say you very learned man—you got a good lot of knowledge in your head."

The erudite Isaac, feeling intensely flattered, rose and bowed, till he almost dipped his nose in his tea cup.

"I trust, gentlemen," he replied, "I may say, without boasting, I do know a thing or two."

"A thing or two?" joined in young Jack. "He knows everything there is to be known, gentlemen, and lots more besides."

"Yah—yah!" exclaimed the Chinese. "He look so, an' dat is what bring me and my broder here."

"Oh, you are brothers, then?" said Mr. Mole.

"Yah!" replied Sunday. "My name is Chow-chow."

"And mine, Chum-chum," joined in Monday.

"Very pretty names, too," remarked our hero to himself, with a quiet grin, "especially Chum-chum."

"Can I be of any service to you, gentlemen, in a scientific capacity?" inquired Mole.

"No—no, tankee, Misser Mole," replied Chow-chow; "my broder and myself not talkee much Inglese."

"Nor can I pretend to talkee much Chinese," returned Mr. Mole, imitating their broken English out of compliment.

*A Chinese mode of salutation, in which the visitor prostrates himself and touches the ground with his forehead nine times.

A few more puffs of their pipes, and then the tutor said:

"I presume, gentlemen, you had some motive in favoring me with this visit?"

"Oh, yah—yah!" returned the gentlemen; "we came here to invite you to dinner with us."

"To dinner!" echoed Mr. Mole, his countenance glowing with gratified surprise.

"Yes, Misser Mole; if you will favor us with the illumination of your presence."

The gratified Mole made instantly a willing offer of himself.

"You will come, then?" they said.

"Undoubtedly," exclaimed Isaac, glowingly.

"So will I, if you ask me," joined in young Jack.

"Ah, yes; so you shall," said the good-natured Chinese. "S'pose you Misser Mole's son, eh?"

"Oh, no," Jack replied; "I'm not a Mole, I'm a Harkaway."

"Oh, indeed; Hark'way."

"Of course you've heard of the Harkaways in the 'History of England,' haven't you?"

"You mean Jack Harkaway, eh?"

"That's the ticket," returned our hero, briskly; "there's dad and me, old Jack and young Jack, two especial celebrities of the reign of her gracious majesty Queen Victoria, of the 'Boys of England.'"

Messieurs Chow-chow and Chum-chum laughed heartily at our hero's free and easy manner, and insisted on his making one of the party.

"Mind you be sure come dinner, Misser Young Jack Boy of England, wid Misser Mole," they said.

"Make yourself perfectly easy, gentlemen," Jack replied; "I'll be there."

"But where are we to come to?" asked Isaac Mole, "and what hour?"

Chow-chow drew from his vest a crimson envelope about a foot long, and presented it with much form to Mole.

"You will find directions as to time and place enclosed," he said.

No sooner were they gone than Mr. Mole, on the tip-toe of curiosity, tore open the crimson envelope.

Its contents, which were fortunately written in English, were as follows:

"Chow-chow and his brother Chum-chum to the Great Mole.

"Expected 25th day, 6 o'clock, at the Abode of Joy, in the Garden of Sweet Perfumes. Drink wine—drink tea—rum if liked—smoke tobacco—eat everything nice.

"CHOW-CHOW—CHUM-CHUM.

"(With compliments)."

Added in pencil—

"Misser Young Jack Harkaway expected very much."

Mole carefully perused this document.

"You see, my dear boy," he remarked, grandly, to Jack, "great men cannot be concealed."

Jack read the note through.

"No more great boys; in fact, it seems to me the boys have the best of it, for I read here, Mr. Mole is only 'expected,' whilst 'Misser Young Jack Harkaway' is expected very much."

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH AN EXTRAORDINARY MISTAKE OCCURS, WHICH INTRODUCES MR. MOLE AND OUR HERO INTO THE ELITE OF CHINESE SOCIETY.

"It is very evident," remarked Mr. Mole, "that these gentlemen are persons of distinction."

"I suppose they are attached to the court of his celestial majesty?"

"They belong to the privy council," Jack informed him.

"Do they, though?"

"Yes," continued young Harkaway, "each one sits at the head of a board, and his word is law."

"Indeed," said Mole, with surprise.

"What a highly-connected set of people we've got amongst all of a sudden."

"Rather," said young Jack.

"What costume ought I to wear at this dinner party?" returned Mr. Mole.

Young Jack shut one eye, and appeared for a few moments to be buried in profound thought.

At length he said:

"Full military costume."

"Full military costume. Why so?" asked Mole.

"Because I have nothing whatever in the shape of military attire."

"Oh, that needn't stand in the way," said his pupil; "I think I can get you anything you require in the way of regimentals."

"But why should I wear regimentals?" asked the tutor. "I do not belong to the army."

"But I think I have heard you say you had relatives in the Volunteers?"

"Quite right, I have."

"Very well, then, that's quite sufficient to entitle you to a military uniform," said young Jack, positively.

"Do you think so?"

"Certainly."

The high-minded Mole was struck with the words of his youthful counselor.

His personal vanity also was tickled, and he replied:

"Your remarks are very sensible, highly so, and far beyond your years. I am inclined to think with you that a uniform would be perhaps the most suitable costume I could adopt."

"Very well, then: I'll undertake to get you your outfit," continued his pupil.

"I'm very much obliged to you," returned Mole, "very much indeed."

"Don't mention it, it's always a pleasure to oblige a celebrated man like you."

"Noble boy," said Mr. Mole.

At about four o'clock Jack returned loaded with the necessary habiliments.

The eyes of the preceptor glistened as he looked at the gorgeous attire.

Certainly the coat was several sizes too large, having been made for a stout man.

Whilst the trousers were not long enough by many inches, the original wearer having been short.

A long sword dangled at his side, and a towering cocked hat with a white feather ornamented his head.

All being ready, the tutor, accompanied by his pupil, left the house.

At the gate, to his great astonishment, he found in attendance the entire body of Chinese laborers.

Of these, some carried flags, some colored lanterns.

Whilst by way of music, our hero had thoughtfully provided a gong, a bell, a drum, and a pair of cymbals.

Isaac Mole was electrified.

"This is extraordinary!" he ejaculated; "and you arranged all this, did you?"

"I did," said young Jack, modestly, "but it was quite necessary."

"I believe you're right, my dear boy, quite right."

"Suppose we start then?" suggested Jack to Mr. Mole.

"I'm quite ready," said Mr. Mole.

On each side of Mr. Mole, as a guard of honor, walked Sunday and Monday, who had resumed their proper appearance, and now accompanied the cortege.

In front waved the flags.

Behind dangled the lanterns.

"Now, then," shouted young Jack, "play up, musicians, and forward to the 'Abode of Joy in the Garden of Sweet Perfumes.'"

The gong sounded, the bell rang, the cymbals clashed, the retainers shouted, and away went the procession.

Through the town and around the outskirts, collecting crowds of gazers as they passed along. But alas, without arriving at their place of destination.

No one seemed to know anything of the locality of the blissful spot.

In the meantime, the hours flew by.

Mr. Mole had got awfully hungry.

"There must be some mistake," suggested Mr. Mole. "Are you sure you have the right address?" he asked of his pupil.

"Positive," answered the latter.

"Dessay we find it by-and-by, Massa Mole, if you hab patience," suggested Monday.

"But I'm starving," growled Mole.

Young Jack called out to the men with the lanterns:

"Light up, you buffers!"

It was now getting dusk, and in a few seconds the light of a score of colored lanterns illuminated the road.

"It looks imposing, doesn't it?" exclaimed Jack.

And then he shouted:

"Forward!"

Again they moved on, when suddenly there was a great commotion.

"What's the matter?" inquired Mr. Mole.

"I think we've got to the Garden of Sweet Perfumes at last," returned our hero.

"I'm inclined to think so myself," said the tutor; "and there's a lovely smell of cooking."

"Well, wedder it de 'bode of joy or not, I tink it good plan to stop here," Sunday suggested; "p'raps git some dinner here."

A crowd of domestics appeared, and a Chinese gentleman, richly dressed, and as round as a tub, came hurrying through the throng.

"Ah, my dear major-general, you come at last?" he exclaimed, eagerly.

Isaac Mole gazed hopelessly at the portly host, and ejaculated faintly:

"Major-general. What does he mean?"

"Why, he takes you for a major-general, of course," hastily whispered his pupil; "and no wonder, you look like one."

The Chinese gentleman went on anxiously:

"Me 'fraid your excellency no come at all."

"The fact is, your eminence," replied our hero, "the governor lost his way, or we should have been here long ago."

"Ah, I see; but never mind, the dinner wait for you."

Isaac Mole was hoisted out in no time.

Young Jack sprang nimbly from his seat.

"I'll have my dinner if I can, anyhow," thought our hero; "I shall be ready for anything after that."

"The major has come at last, my dear friends!" said the worthy host to those assembled; "let me have the honor to present to you his excellency, the British governor, Major-General Brass-knocker."

Mole was completely floored at the unexpected title he had received.

The great man dropped into the seat nearest at hand.

Unfortunately, as he sat down, his wooden leg stuck up, and coming in contact with a tea tray which one of the servants was about to hand to him, it sent tray and tea cups flying in all directions.

The horror and confusion of the embarrassed tutor was indescribable.

At length, however, the excitement caused by the accident subsided.

The tea being finished, dinner began in earnest.

The young Chinese gentlemen seated near Mole and Jack became more and more friendly and convivial.

They pointed out to them several choice dishes of exquisite flavor.

"You must taste little of this," they said, helping their companions to some fresh luxuries.

"Upon my honor, I can't stand any more," protested Jack, with a shudder; "I've had about three times as much as I ought."

"So have I," admitted Mr. Mole, pressing his hands upon his stomach. "I'm sorry to be disobliging, but really I feel if I were to eat another mouthful, I should burst."

"Oh, no—no!" laughed the Chinese gentlemen, "no burst with dis meat. It too tender."

"Pray what do you call this?" inquired Mr. Mole, with some curiosity.

"Dis! Puppy dog," returned the gentleman, smacking his lips, enthusiastically.

"Puppy dog!" gasped the tutor, clapping both hands over his mouth, and shuddering violently.

"Yes, indeed; it great luxury."

"And what's that?" asked Jack, pointing to a dish from which he had been eating.

"Dat is little pussy-cat, what you call—kitten."

Jack's stomach heaved convulsively at this statement.

"I say, old son," he murmured, "I'll take a little brandy neat, if you please."

The cordial was poured out, and Mr. Mole joined his pupil in a "nip," after which they felt better.

"You eat extraordinary things in China," remarked our hero; "we don't care about puppy-dogs, or pussy-cats either, in England."

"Oh, dey great favorite here; so also are de little rats and mouses."

"Rats and mouses!" echoed the preceptor and his pupil simultaneously; "you don't mean to say you eat anything so horrible?"

"Oh, yes; certainly," replied their friends with much admiration; "you eat dem just now, and say dey beautiful."

The eyes of Mr. Mole and young Jack Harkaway turned up in their heads, and they fell back helplessly in their seats.

"More brandy! quick!" gasped the former.

"Ditto—ditto!" echoed Jack.

Again the stimulant was administered, when suddenly the Tartar came out with a tremendous—

"Hoh!"

This was immediately followed by a loud yell, as a couple of well-kneaded bread bullets, propelled by Sunday and Monday, took effect on his right eye and his nose.

The missiles stung him awfully, and with a tremendous oath (in the Tartar language) he sprang to his feet.

"What dat you do—you Ingles—eh?" he demanded, looking fiercely at Jack.

"Are you addressing yourself to me?" inquired young Jack coolly, as he quietly untwisted the wire from the cork of the champagne bottle which he held between his knees.

"Yah! to you, sah!" returned the furious Tartar. "What de debbil you mean to shoot me in my eye—eh? Hoh!"

He stroked his chin and glared at our hero like a fiend.

"I didn't shoot you in your eye," Jack replied; "you're dreaming. Sit down and don't make a fool of yourself."

"I shall not sit down, sah! You shall ask my pardon! Hoh! hoh! yes, you shall!"

"I'll see you blowed first."

"You won't, eh?"

"I won't!"

"Hoh, hoh! then I shall—"

Here the fierce being made a desperate attempt to throw himself across the table and grasp his juvenile defier.

But, at that moment, Jack, who had unfastened the wire and given the bottle a good shake, removed his thumb from the cork.

A loud bang and a fizz was heard, and the irate Mongolian started up, drenched with champagne, and with the cork half-way down his throat.

"I shall kill you!" he raved, as he drew his sword and sprang upon the table.

As the frantic Tartar leapt down upon Mole, the gallant Isaac, with great dexterity, hoisted his wooden leg in the air, so that the ferocious Mongol received the round knob exactly in the pit of his stomach.

"Hoh!" was the only remark he made, as he doubled up and fell with a crash to the ground, from whence he was quickly picked up and carried from the apartment.

Peace being restored, the worthy Mole began to get exceedingly jolly.

"You're—glor'—us people!—hic—very glor'—us!" he exclaimed. "China's great nation!—hic—very great!"

"I respect you all!" he continued, "the puppy-dogs and pussy-cats excepted—not forgetting the rats and mouses—which, as a subject of Great Britain, I decidedly object to. Nevertheless, you're a great nation, and I respect you; I respect you all! I respect his celestial majesty the emperor—good luck to him, and may he never want a teapot."

"Three cheers for the emperor!"

"Hip—hip—hip—hurrah!" shouted Jack.

The worthy Mole having drank a bumper of champagne in honor of his celestial majesty, found himself becoming more and more disposed to conviviality, and volunteered to sing a song.

With your permission I will sing a few lines composed on the spot, expressly in honor of this memorable occasion."

A murmur of applause ran through the festive throng.

And Isaac Mole, clearing his throat, commenced:

"If you happy wish to be,
Go to China!
If you'd taste a cup of tea,
Go to China!
If a dinner you would eat,
I can promise you a treat,
If you go to China!
Puppy dogs, and kittens, too,
Rats and mice a sav'ry stew,
Every day in China!
Jolly dogs and Chinamen,
No other nation feeds like them
Who live in China!
They beat all other countries hollow,
For strength of head, and length of swallow—
Go to China!
Then hurrah for China!
Three cheers for China!
If you want to get fat,
Hurry over to China."

Chorus.

If you want to get fat,
Hurry over to China."

This vocal effusion was received with deafening applause.

Pipes, tea and liquors were again handed around.

Isaac Mole was in the seventh heaven of ecstasy.

"This is—hic—jolly, very jol—ly, my dear boy," he said to his pupil.

"Couldn't be jollier, I think," returned Jack.

"There's only one thing surprises me," Isaac continued.

"What's that?"

"That we haven't seen anything of the two gentlemen who invited us."

"It is rather strange, certainly," admitted Jack.

At this moment the host drew near.

"I hope your excellency enjoys yourself," he said.

"Never better, my dear boy," returned the preceptor, familiarly; "but I miss two very particular members of your family."

The host looked at him in surprise.

"What two do you miss?"

"Chow-chow, and Chum-chum."

The eyebrows of his entertainer went up with a jerk.

"I know nothing of Chow-chow and Chum-chum."

"Oh, gammon!" returned Mr. Mole, poking him sharply in the ribs; "that tale won't do. You're Chow-chow's uncle, you know you are."

"I?" ejaculated the master of the house.

"Yes, of course," insisted Mr. Mole; "you belong to the Hung-poo."

"What you mean?"

"I mean what I say."

"You quite wrong."

"Of course he is," joined in Jack; "the idea of taking you for Chow-chow's uncle, when anyone can see you're Chum-chum's grandfather."

"I tell you," almost shrieked the host, "I know neither Chow-chow nor Chum-chum."

"Then who the deuce are you?" inquired Mr. Mole.

"I am Commissioner Wang-ki."

"Oh!" stammered Mole, "Commissioner Wang-ki, are you?"

The worthy Mole, who found considerable difficulty in keeping his perpendicular, was about to depart, when suddenly a despatch arrived from the emperor.

Commissioner Wang-ki came hurrying toward him.

"His celestial majesty has heard that your excellency is here," he said, "and desires your immediate presence at the palace."

"Bother his celestial majesty!" growled Mole; "I'm tired to death; I can't go to-night."

Commissioner Wang-ki looked aghast at this daring objection, then said:

"You must go."

Once more the gong sounded.

Mr. Mole was, however, unconscious of anything; he had fallen fast asleep.

Young Jack, at first awake, gradually yielded to the motion of the palanquin, and in a very short time he was also wrapped in the arms of Morpheus.

Master and pupil slumbered together.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH THE LITTLE MISTAKE IS DISCOVERED, AND LEADS TO AN AWFUL ROW—HOW IT ENDED.

THE repose of the sleepers was at length disturbed.

"Hoh!"

The occupants of the palanquin aroused themselves and looked out.

Close alongside was the formidable Tartar, stroking his mustache and looking as black as a thundercloud.

"Dear me, is that you?" exclaimed Mr. Mole, confusedly.

"Yah, it is me. Hoh—hoh, yes."

"Ah, I remember you now," said the tutor.

"I remember you, too," returned the fierce individual, with a diabolical grin; "you poke me with your leg in my stomach—hoh—hoh, yes."

"And you did not seem to like it, but what do you want, now, Mr. Hoh-hoh?" inquired young Jack.

"I want nothing, you boy," replied the Tartar, frowning darkly. "I am here to conduct you to his celestial majesty, the emperor."

This recalled the faculties of the somewhat bewildered Isaac.

"Oh, ah, true," he murmured; "I was summoned by the emperor, so I was. Have we arrived at the palace?"

"Yah, this is the palace. Hoh-hoh, yes."

"Stop that ho-hoing, then, and show us the way in," said young Jack.

"I shall announce you two Inglesse first," said the Tartar official, with a scowl. "This way."

At the entrance of the palace stood several of the imperial body-guard.

"Now, then," said the Tartar, abruptly, "how am I to announce you?"

"Tell his imperial effulgence that Mr. I—"

"You're forgetting you're a major-general," said Jack.

"Dear me! so am I," murmured Mr. Mole; "and I've forgotten my name."

"Was it Doormat?" suggested our hero.

"I—I think not."

"Doorscraper? Major-General Doorscraper sounds well."

"No, I don't think it was that."

"Doorknocker, then?"

"No."

"I've got it," exclaimed Jack; "it was Brass-knocker."

"So it was," cried Mr. Mole.

At this juncture the voice of the Tartar again became audible.

"What names?" he growled.

"Major-General Brasspopper—"

"No, Brassknocker," said young Jack.

"Ah, yes; Brasscopper."

"Knocker."

"Knocker. And who are you supposed to be?" asked Mr. Mole, of his pupil.

"Oh, I'm your private secretary, Mr. Jack Harkaway, junior."

"You will have the goodness to announce Major-General Brassknocker and his private secretary, Mr. Jack Harkaway, junior."

"Hoh!" ejaculated the Tartar, as he stroked his chin and disappeared.

Presently he returned.

"Follow me," he said, abruptly.

"Now, then, pull yourself together," counselled Jack, to his tutor, as they went along, "and, if you can, put a little steam into your wooden legs. But whatever you do, don't forget your kotow, when you go into the emperor's presence."

"Kotow!" echoed Mr. Mole. "What in the world's that?"

"It's a Chinese mode of salutation," Jack replied.

"Well, but what shall I have to do?"

"Only go down on your marrowbones, and touch the ground with your forehead nine times."

"It will be very awkward for me to kneel with my wooden legs, which have no joint," remarked the preceptor.

"Well, awkward or not, you must manage it somehow," said Jack. "But—hush! here we are."

The drapery was drawn aside, revealing an open door, through which a soft, clear, mellow light was visible.

The Tartar guide entered, and exclaimed in sonorous accents:

"Major-General Grasshopper, and his private secretary, Mr. Jack Barkaway, junior."

Mr. Mole, making a strong effort to steady himself, stumped forward in as dignified a manner as possible, with his cocked hat under his arm, and his sword clanking at his side, followed by our hero.

His majesty was very short and very corpulent, and bore a striking resemblance to one of those china images frequently seen in the windows of the London tea shops, nodding their heads to customers.

Young Jack at once prostrated himself.

"Down with you!" he whispered to his tutor.

The anxious Isaac contrived somehow to get on to one knee, when he commenced bumping his head on the floor in a most energetic and loyal manner.

It is probable he would have gone on at this exercise all night if young Jack had not checked him.

"Drop it; that'll do," he said to him, in an undertone, "or you'll be knocking a hole in the floor."

His majesty waved his hand as a token that they should rise.

Our hero was on his legs in an instant.

"Whatever shall I do?" groaned the hapless Mole, the drops of perspiration trickling down his nose. "Help me up."

Jack grasped his hand, and gave him a vigorous hoist.

A sharp snap was heard.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"What's the matter now?" inquired Jack.

"My leg—my leg!"

"Well, what of it?"

"It's snapped in half."

"Never mind, try and stand up; lean on me."

Mr. Mole having been hauled up to a perpendicular contrived to balance himself on his right leg, making use of his private secretary's shoulder to support him on the left.

His imperial majesty then spoke:

"I am glad to see you, General—a—Starch—"

His majesty paused, having forgotten the name.

"Collar, your serene magnificence," answered the Tartar, "hoh, yes."

"General Starchcollar," repeated the emperor.

Mr. Mole endured this perversion of names with martyr-like patience, and replied:

"Most gorgeous brother of the sun and moon," cried Mole, "I feel myself dazzled at the honor of being permitted to approach your magnificent presence."

The emperor glanced towards our hero.

"Who is that?" he inquired.

"That is my private secretary, your effulgence," replied the tutor, "Mr. Jack Harkaway, junior."

"Your royal highness has probably heard of me," said our hero, with much animation.

The emperor shook his head.

"No! That's strange," Jack continued. "I assure your majesty, my adventures around the world are causing a wonderful sensation everywhere."

"Hoh—hoh!" burst out the Tartar.

Everybody looked around.

"Who said 'Hoh—hoh!'" inquired the potentate.

"I did, your fragrant mightiness," answered the Mongolian, stroking his chin.

The emperor eyed the offender with a fearful squint, and then pointing to the door, exclaimed briefly, but imperatively:

"Get out!"

The Tartar made a profound obeisance, and took himself off.

The emperor then addressed himself once more to our hero.

"You spoke of your adventures," he said.

"Yes, your celestial eminence," replied Jack, "published weekly at the office, 173 Fleet street, London, E. C."

The potentate turned to his prime minister.

"Foh," he said, "see that the 'Adventures of Jack Harkaway Around the World' are ordered immediately."

The mandarin bowed, and made a note of the work in a large book that was brought to him.

The emperor then spoke again to Mr. Mole.

"You are very thin, Major Cartstopper."

The major admitted the fact humbly.

"It is not good to be thin," the emperor continued; "you must get fat. Now approach."

"Don't leave me," whispered Mole to Jack.

"Well, but his effulgence says we're to approach," Jack replied. "Come on."

"It's impossible; I can't."

"Oh, yes, you can; try a hop."

"If I do, off will come my leg to a certainty."

The emperor yawned again.

All the mandarins followed the example of their august master.

"Approach," repeated his celestial majesty.

"I should be most happy, your serene effulgence," returned Mr. Mole, pleadingly; "but I've met with an accident."

"What accident?" inquired the emperor.

"Compound fracture of the left pin, your magnificence," answered Jack.

The potentate reflected for a moment.

Then, taking two rings from his fingers, he sent them by one of the mandarins.

"Accept them as tokens of my friendly feeling towards the sovereign and country you represent. Now you can go."

Hurried footsteps were heard in the corridor at that moment.

The formidable Tartar once more entered hastily.

"Treason!" he shouted; "hoh, hoh!"

"Treason!" echoed his celestial majesty, turning slightly green.

"Yes, your mightiness."

"Approach," said his majesty.

The Mongolian hastily ascended the throne steps, and whispered to his august master.

The imperial brow lowered; the imperial eyes glanced suspiciously at the representatives of the British constitution and his private secretary.

"I'm afraid we're bowled out, after all," whispered Jack to Mole.

"Goodness gracious, I hope not."

"It's a case, I'm afraid," returned our hero; "we shall be impaled as safe as nails."

"Heaven forbid," returned Isaac.

To add to his apprehension, the emperor at the moment uttered a loud exclamation.

"Impostors!" he shouted. "Who are you?"

"My name is Mole—Isaac Mole, instructor of youth, at your majesty's service," faltered Mole.

"And you tell me just now, you are Major-General Baccystopper!" exclaimed the incensed potentate.

"It's all right, your high and mighty Cock-o'-trumps," said our hero, in a soothing and confidential tone; "there's been a slight mistake, that is all."

"The general has just arrived. Bring him before me!" cried the emperor.

And away hurried the Tartar.

In a few seconds, footsteps were again heard without, and a party of mandarins, headed by

Wang-ki, their late host, came hurrying into the chamber.

Among them was a stout, fierce-looking Englishman in uniform.

In an instant the dwelling of the serene sky was turned into a Babel of confusion.

Everyone spoke at once.

Nobody understood a word anyone else said.

At length the emperor shouted:

"Who are you?"

"I have the honor to be the English governor, Major-General Brassknocker. I had received an invitation to dinner with this honorable member of your majesty's government," the general continued, pointing to the commissioner, "but an accident on board my vessel prevented me from coming on shore till a late hour, and I then hastened to explain."

"But who, then, are these miserable impostors?" demanded the emperor, eyeing Mole and Jack with indignant sternness.

"I assure your majesty," began Mole, earnestly.

"How dare you assume a name that does not belong to you?" demanded the celestial monarch, fiercely.

"How dare you enter my house under false pretences, and eat my dinner, eh?" cried the indignant Wang-ki.

"You asked us to come in," returned the preceptor, "and we didn't like to make ourselves disagreeable."

"Certainly not," joined in our hero, making a desperate effort to set matters straight.

"You're a couple of swindlers," cried the real General Brassknocker.

"Swindlers," echoed everybody.

"And he poke me in the stomach with his leg!" shrieked the ferocious Tartar, savagely.

"Hoh, hoh! yes."

Jack felt strongly inclined to give him one on his nose, but prudence restrained him.

"Come, Jack," cried Mole, trying to put a bold face on the matter, "we had better say good-night to all."

And then he took a hop towards the door.

"Stop!" shouted his celestial majesty.

There was no occasion to utter this mandate.

At the first hop, off dropped Mr. Mole's fractured limb, and down went Mr. Mole on the ground.

The hapless tutor was completely done.

"Seize them both, and lock them up," cried the emperor, "and to-morrow they shall receive their deserved punishment. Away with them!"

This was a crisis.

Jack did not like the idea of deserting his tutor.

As these thoughts passed through his mind, several of the Chinese guard pounced upon the helpless Isaac, and hoisted him up very unceremoniously, and hurried him out.

"Save the pieces," he murmured, as he looked anxiously after the fragments of his wooden leg as he was borne away.

"I will," cried our hero, as he picked up the broken stump.

"Now, then, you boy, Inglesse," exclaimed three of the soldiers; "you come wid us."

"Not if I know it," cried Jack, as he dashed in amongst them with his tutor's wooden leg.

In less time than it takes to write it, the imperial body-guard were ignominiously scattered.

The way of escape was open.

Out Jack rushed, brandishing his missile triumphantly.

In the corridor he encountered the formidable Tartar.

"Stop, you boy," he shouted.

"I shan't, ugly mug!" bawled our hero, defiantly, as he pressed forward.

But the Mongolian drew his sword, and opposed his progress.

"You would escape," he cried, as he made a terrific slash with his weapon; "hoh—hoh, yes."

"Me not forget the stiff leg in my stomach, and de cork in my throat."

Jack nimbly eluded his blow, and cried out:

"Well, for a change, old fellow, take Mole's leg on your cranium."

And the Tartar received a hard whack from Mole's stump.

"Hoh!" he gurgled, and down he fell like a log.

Jack hurried on towards the entrance, where he saw soldiers waiting to intercept him.

He retraced his steps, and entering an apartment, found a window open:

Out of this he dropped into the garden.

No sooner had his feet touched the ground, than he was seized by two soldiers.

In vain he struggled, the odds were too great.

"Let me go, you coffee-coloured rascals," he cried passionately.

"No—no; we lock you up, you Inglesse tief boy, and kill you to-morrow."

They commenced hurrying him along, when suddenly the sound of two well-known voices greeted his ears.

"Dere him are, dere Massa Jack."

Looking up, to his great joy he beheld the burly forms of Sunday and Monday.

The faithful fellows, fearing some disaster, had lingered in the garden, and now came up just at the right moment.

It took just four blows from their brawny fists to send the imperial guard flying, and in less than two minutes our hero, with Sunday and Monday, were scudding along the road towards home.

* * * * *

The next morning, the hapless Isaac Mole was brought up before Commissioner Wang-ki, to be tried for his imposture of the previous day.

The trial was very brief, and the sentence that the tutor should stand in the pillory for six hours.

After which he was to receive fifty strokes of the bastinado.

The unfortunate Mole had endured one hour's purgatory with his head stuck in the distressing implement of torture, and was looking forward in dire anticipation to the other infliction, when, to his unspeakable joy, he beheld approaching, his pupil, accompanied by Mr. Harkaway senior, Dick Harvey, and the red-headed Major-General Brassknocker.

Fortunately the general was known to Harkaway, and on matters being explained, and a slight tip of three hundred dollars being handed over to the Commissioner Wang-ki, that incorruptible functionary consented to set his prisoner at liberty.

So ended this adventure, but so greatly did it impress Mr. Mole, that he never again sung a song in praise of China, and always shuddered when he spoke of a Chinese dinner party.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WITNESS OF GUILT.

MEANWHILE matters had gone on rather seriously on board the pirate ship *Flowery Land*.

Let us return for a moment to the hours succeeding the untimely end of the wretched man, Robert Emmerson.

Just as daylight dawned, the watch was about to be changed, when an alarming discovery was made.

One of the men had disappeared.

This was Spirillo.

The other man was discovered lying upon his back on deck insensible.

This was one Von Koppenhaagen, the pirate who attempted to prevent Jack and his friends from escaping from the ship on the night of Emmerson's murder.

"Hold!" shouted the mate of the watch, "there has been some traitor's play here. Bring some water, and send for a doctor."

One ran for water and soon brought it, and they did their best to revive the unlucky Dutchman.

"Why doesn't the American doctor come?" said the mate, impatiently.

The sailor who had been sent in search of the doctor, came back looking considerably upset.

"The doctor!" exclaimed the mate, impatiently. "Where is he?"

"Gone."

"Go and look after him," said the mate.

"I have looked after him everywhere, but he is not to be found."

"Bah!" ejaculated the mate hastily, "bring him here at once—do you hear?"

"I think he must have left the ship—the two boys are gone, too."

The mate looked up.

It caught his attention now, for the matter began to look serious.

"The boys too?"

"Yes."

"That's strange."

Von Koppenhaagen groaned.

Then he opened his eyes.

"Der tuyvel!" he muttered. "Spirillo! Such a smacks to my eye, ter tuyvel!"

"Spirillo!" said the mate, eagerly; "but how did you get hurt like this?"

"Der toctor," answered the Dutchman. "Dat tam tuyvel, der Yankee doctor."

"What, the old American?" said the mate.

"Yah. I stop him as he was getting down into the boat, and he gave me der tam smacks to der eye, an' down I drops."

An exclamation burst from the mate.

"He's escaped then! Confound him!"

"Zo zay I," said Von Koppenhaagen, "and der boys also; confounds der boys."

"Stop—stop," cried the mate, "surely the boys—"

"Have escape too—yah wohl, that is zo."

They looked through their glasses in every direction. And looked in vain.

The little boat was long since out of sight.

"Devil take them!" cried the mate. "I'd sooner have knocked them on the head myself than have had them get off in this way."

"That's just what I proposed," said a voice at his elbow, "only you all opposed it then; now it is too late, and their escape puts us in great danger."

The mate turned round, and found the speaker was Hunston.

The man with the iron arm.

"I would have knocked them on the head," continued Hunston, viciously. "But like a pack of obstinate fools you opposed me."

"It was no fault of mine," said the mate.

"You're amongst the rest."

"It is false."

"I say it is true."

One of the crew came running up with a scared look, and crying out:

"Emmerson is dead! Emmerson is murdered."

"Emmerson!" exclaimed the pirate mate.

"Yes, Robert Emmerson. He lies dead, murdered in his cabin below."

Hunston might have been observed to change color just then had they not been far too much engaged to notice it.

"Who can have done this dreadful deed?" said the mate. "Is there treason among us?"

The very mention of the word seemed to inspire alarm in the bystanders.

The pirates looked from one to the other and began to murmur ominously:

"Of all our new hands," said the mate, "this was the best and bravest."

"You're not very polite," said Toro, advancing his huge body into the crowd gathered about Von Koppenhaagen, who, by the way, appeared still in a state of semi-sensibility.

"It is the truth," returned the mate, "and that's more in my way than politeness."

A fierce oath burst from the hot-blooded Italian, and he laid his hand on his knife.

Now Hunston by this time had somewhat recovered his presence of mind.

He gave Toro a warning sign, and then he said, as though a sudden thought had occurred to him:

"The American doctor is gone—the two boys are gone—why, of course, it is clear enough who has done it."

"Who?"

"Who but the doctor!"

"Not the doctor," exclaimed Von Koppenhaagen, suddenly gaining strength, "not the doctor."

"Who knows that?" said Hunston.

"You," returned the Dutchman, with strange vehemence, "you—no one better."

"I" faltered the guilty Hunston, "I?"

"Yes, you—for you did it!"

"A lie!" ejaculated Hunston, "a foul lie!"

"It is true, and you know it—I know it—for I saw you strike Emmerson down!"

Hunston tottered back, and fell against Toro.

"The man is mad—his mind is wandering!"

"Of course he is," added the Italian; "why, Hunston was next me in the cabin the whole night."

"You'll back him up," retorted Von Koppenhaagen; "you will, of course, for you was his accomplice!"

Toro made a rush at the Dutchman, knife in hand, and had he got at him, he would probably have got this unpleasant witness out of the way with a single blow.

But the pirates would not permit this.

They closed around Toro and hustled him back.

"Keep off, or I will not answer for your lives!" said the mate; "and let's hear Von Koppenhaagen out."

"He raves," said Hunston; "he is deranged."

"Not me," said the Dutchman, desperately; "and if you can find that one-armed man's knife, you will find der blood fresh upon it—Emmerson's blood."

"Seize him!"

The mate had hardly uttered the word, when a dozen horny hands grappled with Hunston, and ransacked his pockets for the knife.

But it was not about him.

"He has not been so imprudent as to keep the knife about him," said Koppenhaagen; "but look at his iron arm."

Hunston fought like a lion to oppose this.

"Lend me a hand, Toro," he cried, "to keep these devils off!"

Toro fell to it with a will, and hurling his huge carcass amongst them, bore down two or three of the pirates by sheer weight.

But this was only a short-lived triumph.

One of the men who was down seized the Italian giant by the legs, and so hampered his movements that in a moment they had him toppled over and pinned to the deck.

Hunston was likewise soon secured, and his sleeve dragged up, revealing the mechanical arm, the ingenious workmanship of the murdered Robert Emmerson.

And then they saw the legend upon the steel arm was smeared with blood, whose freshness was beyond all question.

"See—see?" cried Von Koppenhaagen; "that is Emmerson's blood there now."

Thus brought home to him, Hunston stammered, and faltered out some meaningless words.

But this was only confirmatory of his guilt.

"Tie him up!" said the mate.

This was done.

Hand and foot he was bound, and in such a way that he was powerless.

Toro fought desperately—but vainly.

He was tied up likewise by the pirates.

"And now," said the mate, "bring them before the captain, and he shall fix their punishment for acting without orders."

CHAPTER IX.

THE STEEL ARM TELLS ITS TALE.

WITH no gentle hands, the pair of ruffians were brought up before their fellow scoundrel and leader, the Chinese captain.

The latter was a big, burly fellow, and for a Chinese, really a very superior man.

One fit to command.

His superiority to his fellows was shown by the way in which he kept his men in a perfect state of discipline.

The whole crew looked up to him, and to them, his lightest word was law.

He was a man who had travelled about a good deal, and spoke several languages, our own among the number, with considerable fluency.

"What have they done?" asked the Chinese captain.

"Nothing," said Hunston, "only made ourselves hated by the crew, for seeking your interest and theirs as well as our own."

The captain turned to their accusers.

"Speak," he said. "What have you to charge them with?"

"Murder!"

"It is false!" began the furious Italian.

But they soon stopped Toro's mouth.

"Whom have they murdered?" demanded the captain.

"Our comrade, Robert Emmerson."

"Emmerson!" iterated the captain. "Is Emmerson dead?"

"Yes."

"And they have murdered him?"

"Yes."

"A lie!"

"Silence!" said the captain. "Who accuses them?"

"I do, captain," said Von Koppenhaagen, stepping forward, "and I can prove my words, for I have seen Hunston knock him down mit my own eyes."

A murmur ran through the crew.

A wave of the captain's hand quieted them.

"How came Von Koppenhaagen to witness this murder?"

"It was my watch," said the Dutchman. "Spirillo was mit me, and he tried to persuade me to leab der shib, to get away vrom der *Flowerly Land*, mit him and somevon else, for he haf got tired of it, he says. But I says:

"No; I vill go ven I wants to, not before."

"While ve was talking, up comes der boy, Jack Hargavay, and dey begins to speak togeder."

"Spirillo likes der boy, because der boy nurse him when he fall from der shrouds. So I lets 'em talk, and presently up comes dem two."

"Dey bounce on der young Hargavay, and dry to gill him, but he rons away, and he gets down into der cabin vere Emmerson was asleep; so I went back to get help."

"Help for what?"

"Help to save der boy," said Von Koppenhaagen, "he is worth a goodly ransome."

"Right."

"Besides vich, it is der gaptain's orders."

"True."

"Vell, before I can get far, I hears a great noise, and back I go to der cabin, and jost as I

gets on der ladder, I see Emmerson defending der boy."

"Dey dries all dey can to get him, but Emmerson is too much for dem, and den Hunston draws his knife and stigs Emmerson."

"A lie!" shouted Hunston, fiercely.

"I swear it."

"It is a base lie!" ejaculated Toro, "and the murderer is no doubt Von Koppenhaagen, who has hatched all this tale to shift the guilt on to innocent shoulders."

"Silence. Go on with your story."

"But den day comes op der cabin stairs and sneags away vile I hides; an' den I hear a noise ovare dere."

"I greebs up jost in time to see Spirillo get over der shib's side, and den young Harkaway, and den der toctor—tam him! I stobs der toctor and he gibs me a splodge in der eye dat sents me down all of a loomps on der deck vast asleep, an'—an'—dat's all."

A short silence followed.

"And do you believe in this?" demanded Hunston, haughtily.

"Bah!" said the Italian, contemptuously.

The Chinese captain frowned at the speaker, and then said:

"What have you to say against the charge?"

"Why, this," returned Hunston; "Robert Emmerson was my friend. It was he who did me the greatest service that living man ever did, by replacing my cruel loss."

And as he spoke, he raised the mechanical arm.

"What other proof have you of their guilt?"

"You vant more proof?"

"Yes."

"Den," said the Dutchman, quite as unmoved as ever, "if you vant der broof, just look at his zteele arm!"

"Ah!"

Hunston could not keep back an exclamation of alarm.

In an instant he was seized by a dozen eager hands, and the mechanical arm was laid bare.

They all strode forward to catch a glimpse of it.

Then a murmur of horror ran through the throng.

The legend on the steel arm was smeared with blood.

CHAPTER X.

THE SENTENCE ON HUNSTON AND TORO.

"WHAT do you say, men?"

It was the pirate captain who spoke.

The evidence was overwhelming.

The two ruffians were dumbfounded, and their own confusion at this critical moment confessed their guilt.

"Guilty!"

They would have protested, but the captain would not hear them.

"Silence!" he said, in solemn and impressive tones. "That condemns you! The steel arm avenges its inventor. The legend on it dooms you to death."

They had not a word to say for themselves now.

Hunston cowered with fear.

A superstitious dread settled upon him.

And why?

Can you not guess?

He remembered Robert Emmerson's words concerning the legend on the mechanical arm.

Already had the prediction of the luckless Protean Bob been verified in a certain manner.

The steel arm had been raised against a friend, and already it had betrayed the guilt of the wearer.

Hunston remembered all the peculiarities of the unfortunate Emmerson, and shuddered when he thought of the solemnity with which he—Emmerson—had predicted what had happened.

"What shall we do with them?" demanded the captain.

"Hang them!" shouted the pirates.

"Get ready the rope!"

By the alacrity displayed in the ghastly preparations, it was clear that the verdict was in accordance with their wishes.

Toro was the boldest of the two desperadoes, but his heart quailed at what he now beheld.

"Is it possible," he said to himself, "that I have passed through all the many varied scenes and episodes of my life to come to this! To be hanged by a set of Chinese pirates? No—no, it cannot be."

He would not accept his fate without an effort on his own behalf.

"You will do what you like, comrades," he said; "but might is not always right—nor is it now. You have no more right to dispose of our

lives than we have to dispose of yours. When we joined you, it was to bring you certain information which was to be useful to you, and the profit to accrue from it was to be divided equally between us. And now that you have all that we can bring, it is an easy way of getting out of your part of the bargain, to assassinate us under a pretext."

The Chinese captain appeared to be in some measure struck by this bold address.

"You have some right to speak thus, Toro," he said; "but—"

"Right!" echoed the Italian, bitterly, following up with eagerness the faintest advantage; "who would venture to deny the right?"

"You have heard your sentence?" said the captain.

"Yes."

"And you?" he added, turning to Hunston.

"I have."

"Then what have you to urge in mitigation of your doom?"

"This," retorted Hunston, with a brief flash of boldness; "you have no right to take our lives. We came here—trusted ourselves in perfect good faith in your hands, and had you not wanted our services, or our information, you should have told us so, or let us know that you wanted to part company with us."

"Supposing we spared your lives, what would you propose?"

"We have no suggestion to make," replied Toro, obstinately. "We are innocent of all crime, and can have nothing to say."

"Then I will speak for you," said the captain.

Then turning to the crew, he went on to say:

"These two men have merited death at our hands. I object to these strong measures among ourselves, and propose that we should set them adrift in a boat, and let them shift for themselves. What do you say?"

But few dissentient voices were heard when the captain spoke.

"Your will is law, captain," said the men.

"Lower the boat," called the captain, "and let us have done with this job at once."

The command was speedily obeyed, and into the boat were pitched a few days' rough rations—chiefly biscuit and water.

"Now, begone," said the captain, pointing to the boat.

The prisoners sullenly shook themselves together, and made a few steps forward.

Then Hunston paused.

His first sensation, on hearing his punishment mitigated thus, had been one of unfeigned relief.

Now he began to feel uneasy.

An inward warning was at work, telling him that he was being conducted to a living death.

Death by slow torture.

Death in its most horrible form of all.

Starvation.

"I refuse to go," he said.

"Then you have but a few moments to live," returned the captain.

Then turning to the men, he made them a sign to proceed with the rope.

"What do you say?" said the captain to Toro; "do you go, or—" and here he gave a significant glance at the preparations at the rope—"stay?"

Toro grunted.

"It's no choice, captain," he said. "I will go."

"Over with you, then."

With many a muttered imprecation, the huge Italian got over the ship's side, and was lowered into the boat.

"Now, men, place the rope around the other's neck, and off with him," said the captain.

They began to drag Hunston away, but the latter's fears got the better of his sullenness now, and he cried out for mercy.

"Since you give me the choice," he said, "I'll go with Toro."

The captain frowned.

"I gave you no choice, I only gave orders."

"Then I obey," said Hunston, eagerly.

"You must beg it as a favor now, upon your knees," said the captain, sternly.

"I do—I do!" said Hunston, on his knees groveling and abasing himself.

"Lower yet—in the dirt—prostrate yourself, or you shall hang for the gulls to peck at."

Hunston obeyed.

His fears took every spark of manhood from him, if ever he had been possessed of any.

"Mercy—mercy!" he cried, "anything better than that?"

The pirate captain spurned him with his foot, and turned away with a look of unutterable disgust.

And then they dragged the wretched Hunston up, and dropped him in the raging sea.

"Now, swim away," cried the mate, leaning over; "for if you are within range by the time

we have counted a hundred, we shall fire into you."

By this time the boat was a considerable distance from the ship.

Hunston, however, was a powerful swimmer, and gradually neared it.

But he had not calculated on the fatigue caused by an incessant use of his artificial arm, and suddenly he found his strength fail.

Toro was standing up in the boat, watching the progress of his comrade.

Suddenly Hunston threw up both arms, exclaiming:

"Help, Toro—help me, for I am sinking!"

CHAPTER XI.

MAGIC ISLAND AND FAIRY CREEK.

THE Harkaway party made up their minds to leave China forthwith.

Mr. Mole disposed of his plantation and property generally for the second time, and they invested the capital thus realized, together with some money added by Harkaway, Dick Harvey and Jefferson.

The ship thus became the joint property of the four persons named—Isaac Mole, Harkaway, Dick Harvey and Jefferson.

Long consultations were held with Spirillo in regard to the treasure island of the Greek Archipelago, and the ex-pirate showed them to their entire satisfaction that young Jack's confidence in him had been entirely warranted.

He had not only charts and plans of the treasure island, but he also had a written description of the place, giving the most elaborate details.

So Harkaway and his friends quickly made arrangements to start in search of the pirates' treasure on Greek Island.

Jack and his party had their adventures, but as they did not materially affect the progress of this veritable narrative, we propose simply gliding over the waters of the archipelago itself, changing the scene as rapidly as though our pen were a harlequin's wand.

And when they first sighted land, after a weary waste of water had been passed, Isaac Mole, who had been limp and despondent through sea-sickness, suddenly stumped along the deck, and regained his wonted joyous demeanor.

"So this is Greece?" he exclaimed to his pupil, who stood beside him.

"Yes, sir," said young Jack.

"Classic Greece! 'Those Isles of Greece,' as the poet has sung."

"He and grease is much of a muchness, sir, I thought," said young Jack.

"My dear boy," replied the tutor, "don't give your mind to vulgar joking; punning is the lowest kind of wit."

Spirillo here came up with Dick Harvey and Mr. Jefferson.

"We shall have to shift our course a point, sir," said the former.

"Is that our destination?" asked Mr. Jefferson, pointing to the land ahead.

"No, sir."

"What is the name of that place then?"

"That, sir, must be the Island of Scio."

"Scio's rocky isle," said Mr. Mole, who was irrepressible, when he had a quoting fit on him.

"So that is Scio, of which we have all heard and read so much; and how far is our journey now?"

"We shall sight our island, sir, in less than an hour."

Some of the party were for landing at Scio, and making a short stay upon the island.

But this was opposed by Jack Harkaway upon several grounds.

"Let us get through our work first," said he, "and then we can play as much as you wish, and I'll join you, for I long to get over to the place myself."

"But I don't see that the case is so urgent," suggested one.

"No," answered Harkaway, "but you must remember that our friend Spirillo has made this journey with that one sole object—the pirate's secret cave."

"Yes, it is best," said Jefferson, "for it would not do to risk everything after coming this far."

Scio was passed about an hour, when they sighted land again.

Spirillo and young Jack were standing upon the quarter-deck together, and the former handed young Jack his glass.

"There," said he, "that is our destination."

The boy took the glass, saying:

"That?"

"Yes."

"The coasts seem to be covered with vegetation," said young Jack.

"They are."

"And is it possible that that island is uninhabited?"

"Not quite," replied Spirillo, significantly.

"Then how is it the pirates contrive to—"

"Keep it to themselves? Easily answered," said Spirillo. By his unscrupulous daring he got the treasure, and the place, too, to himself. The few he has chosen to keep are men devoted to him partly by love, but a great deal more, I doubt not, by fear. Monastos is a man to dread."

Young Jack stared.

"He must be a very desperate character."

"He is."

"Quite a magician, in point of fact."

The ex-pirate smiled.

"I don't quite believe in magic," he said; "but this I know—Monastos is a man who in the dark ages would have been a king. He has been a great power in the political world, as it is."

"Indeed."

"Ay, indeed. You may laugh, Master Jack, but you don't know this part of the world; you cannot imagine the state of things here. Why, Monastos has been such a power that the government truckled to him—the government has bargained with him."

"Bargained?"

"Yes."

"That's rather a strong expression," said Jack.

"It answers exactly to the state of their relations with this pirate chief. They would have beaten him under, had they possessed the power."

"But they hadn't."

"No."

"That sounds odd."

"To Englishmen—yes, I know it. But here it's very different. What would you say if I told you that Monastos had served the government as banker?"

"Banker! Come, I say, Spirillo, that is stretching it a little too far."

"Not a bit," Spirillo replied. "Monastos has, with his enormous riches, helped to make up the deficit in more than one budget—they wink at it, that's all. He has had money to lend, and they have been willing to borrow."

"Why, Spirillo," said Jefferson, coming up just then, "I thought you spoke of landing about here."

"Yes, there is a creek so cunningly concealed in the coast, that no one has ever detected it to my knowledge," said Spirillo.

"Indeed!" said Jefferson, with a stare.

"So well hidden, sir, that you shall seek for it and not find it, even knowing of its existence."

The confidence with which the ex-pirate spoke, excited considerable curiosity, and the interest of the party increased every minute.

The command of the vessel was left exclusively now to Spirillo, who scanned the coast closely, as they glided by.

Watching his expression closely, they perceived that a smile of satisfaction flitted across his face as he turned and closed his telescope.

Then he gave orders for swinging the ship around a bit so as to steer her full at a narrow little creek, whose banks were covered with thickly-grown trees and shrubs. So thickly as to appear well-nigh impenetrable.

Moreover, the creek did not appear to be more than a few feet wide, and as for its depth, it must be insignificant.

"Why, I can see to the end of the creek," declared one of the sailors.

"Well, if that's Cap'n Spriller's harbor, I think we shan't want much harb'ring long," said another sailor.

"What do you mean by that, my good man?" asked a voice at his elbow.

It was Mr. Mole.

The worthy Isaac was getting a bit uneasy.

"What do you mean?" repeated Mr. Mole, as the sailor stared very hard at him.

"Why, if your honor must know—and axing your pardon," was the sailor's reply, with a scrape, "I think we shall find the *Sea Mew* on the beach—or maybe on the rocks, keel up'ards."

"Goodness me!" ejaculated the tutor. "Don't you think she's sound?"

"Lawks, yes, she's right and tight."

"Tight," thought Mr. Mole, who was not to say strictly *compos mentis* himself. "That's an insinuation. The fellow means to hint that the ship'll roll over because she's tight; I'll report that fellow."

The *Sea Mew* swung around, answering her helm as truly as one of the penny steamers on the Thames, and shot into the little creek, and through the foliage, which parted on being touched as readily as if it had been a screen of

feathers, and closing in upon her, completely screened her from the view of any passing vessel on the ocean highway.

And as soon as they passed by the first dense screen of foliage, the creek widened, making a very respectable harbor.

"I propose that we cast anchor here, Spirillo," said Harkaway.

"Good."

Young Jack and his companion, Harry Girdwood, stood amongst the crowd on deck, eagerly watching the progress of the vessel.

"I'll bet I'm the first to land," cried young Jack.

"I'll have you, Jack," retorted Harry.

And then they both made a rush and a scramble, when a pretty musical voice, close by, told them that they had both lost.

"Somebody is there before you," said little Emily, with a merry laugh; "look up there."

They obeyed, and there they saw Nero, perched on the topmost branch of a lofty tree.

"You vagabond!" shouted young Jack, shaking his fist at the agile monkey, "you have stolen a march on us."

Nero grinned his reply.

Moreover, he retorted by an undignified gesture, that his young master had taught him with infinite pains—that defiant sign that is accompanied by placing the thumb to the nose and stretching out the fingers.

"I'm next, at any rate," cried young Jack.

And before Harry Girdwood could guess what he was after, he had scrambled up, and stood leaning to the company generally that was assembled on the deck of the *Sea Mew*.

"Brave hearts! Welcome to Magic Island!" cried young Jack. "Hurrah—hurrah!"

CHAPTER XII.

SPIRILLO—A MYSTERY—HIDDEN DANGER.

MAGIC ISLAND. It was happily named by young Jack.

"If that is Magic Island," cried little Emily to young Jack, "this I will christen Fairy Creek."

"Hurrah—bravo, Emily!" cried Jack.

This was not less happy than young Jack's name, and it was as generally adopted.

A consultation was held upon deck between Jack Harkaway, Dick Harvey, Mr. Jefferson, Magog Brand, Spirillo, Nabley, Pike, and lastly, Isaac Mole.

"Before we land, Spirillo," said Jack Harkaway, "tell me, do you think that we have to apprehend anything like a surprise?"

"Scarcely," was Spirillo's reply, "while we are in any force."

"Do you think there is any danger?"

"To any one of us venturing about alone—yes, great danger. While we are in parties—no. But I must not disguise from you, gentlemen all, that we have an ugly enemy to face in the owner of this island."

"What have we to fear?" said young Jack, coming up at that moment.

"Mole, the pirate chief, boy," said Spirillo. "He has the patience of the cat watching for a mouse, and to this quality he adds the ferocity of the tiger."

Mr. Mole coughed.

"This is a most objectionable party," he said. "I propose we have him a wide berth."

"You need better, Mr. Mole," said Dick, "our work is short work of your sailing."

"What?" said Mr. Mole. "My sailing?"

"I've got you, I mean your workwork, your understanding."

Mr. Mole coughed.

"Mr. Harvey, if you were not my old friend, I should certainly demand satisfaction."

"I'll not quarrel," returned Dick, cheerfully.

Mr. Mole put an end to any further discussion by plunging at once into the arguments for the safe conduct of the expedition against the island.

"Mr. Nabley must be left in command with Mr. Mole," said Harkaway.

"Very good."

"The vessel must be kept with the greatest vigilance night and day."

"Agreed."

"Each watch must be composed of at least three persons."

"During the night watches, a patrol must be sent out at intervals of not more than two hours."

"And Spirillo, nothing appears to be settled," said young Jack, looking at his watch.

"I'll be there in five minutes," said Harry Girdwood, looking at his watch.

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betray a little anxiety in making our parting conditions and rules, it must not surprise you."

"It does not."

"No," added Pike, with warmth, "we are indeed grateful for your confidence—eh, Nabley?"

"Indeed we are."

"Rather!"

"You may count upon our zeal," said Nabley. "We have been used to watching, and waiting, too, for the matter of that, eh, Dan?"

"Ah! indeed!"

"Now, then, my friends," said Harkaway, earnestly, "for our parting word. We are going upon an excursion of some danger; we mustn't attempt to disguise that fact to ourselves."

"It only behoves us to show that better part of valor, discretion, upon all occasions, and if I don't mistake we shall do big things. There must be one fixed word of understanding between us. Should there be great danger upon either side, a blue light shall be burnt, and that shall be the signal of recall."

"Good!"

These words sank deeply into everybody's mind.

"Should there be great danger upon either side, a blue light shall be burnt, and that shall be the signal of recall," continued Harkaway.

"In other words, the blue light shall be an appeal to the others for aid."

"That's an understanding," said Jefferson; "but please the pigs, there will be no need for blue lights."

"Amen to that," said his little friend, Magog.

"Well, now, Spirillo," said Harvey, "when you are ready?"

"Forward!"

"One word more," said the ex-pirate. "Let us refer to the maps we have got, and do everything in proper orderly style."

"Of course."

"Let us have the charts up."

"Good!"

A man was sent to the saloon for the maps and charts in question, and they were spread out on the top of a big chest on the deck.

"Before we go into this job deeply," said Harkaway, "I propose that we adjourn to tiffin."

"I second the honorable member's motion," said Mr. Mole, with great gravity.

"And I, too," said Harry, "for I'm beastly hungry."

"And I'm filthy peckish," added Jefferson.

"This language," exclaimed Isaac Mole, much shocked, "this language is not parliamentary. I rise to order."

"Hear—hear!" cried Dick Harvey; "so do I. I rise to order chops, and a pint of wine for one."

"This is levity," said Mr. Mole, indignantly.

"It is wasting good time," said Jefferson, laughingly. "What do you say, Caesar Augustus?" he said, turning to Sunday, who stood close by.

"That's my platform, colored," retorted the dunce, looking all over his shiny face. "I could just eat enough to open a ship's water-tight door."

"I have no appetite," said Spirillo, who had grown suddenly downcast. "No heart for eating, and I think I shall run on shore to stretch my legs while you eat. Master Jack!"

"Halloo!" cried young Jack, from up aloft.

"Don't venture far from sight."

"All right."

"I shall join you, Spirillo," said Harry Girdwood; "eh?"

"By all means."

And the two clambered up on to the rock and found young Jack, who was playing all kinds of merry antics with Nero, in sight of the company generally on board.

From this eminence, they could obtain a pretty fair view of the country in all directions.

It was a lovely place, and merited fully its fanciful appellation of Magic Island.

The fruitful vine met the view on every side, and the eye was dazzled with the brilliancy of the flowers.

Jays, parrots and other birds of the gayest plumage filled the air with their cries.

"Do you see that place 'ere, Master Jack?"

"That narrow between those two dark banks?"

"Yes."

"I do."

"That's our way. We have to go down the bank and over off to the left."

"Is it far?"

"Not very."

"That would be an awkward place for an ambuscade, Spirillo," said Harry Girdwood.

"Spirillo, what has he said, and how did he say it?" said young Jack, looking at his watch.

"That's what I heard, and what I fancied I heard," said Harry Girdwood, looking at his watch.

"Yes."

"Why," said Harry Girdwood, gravely, "a single rifle could protect that ravine from a whole troop."

Spirillo nodded a grave acquiescence.

"Before the party disembarks," he said, thoughtfully, "I'll climb up the right bank, scramble through the trees and bushes, and see that there are no signs of an ambuscade."

"Be careful," said Harry Girdwood.

"Trust me. But we must not risk the whole expedition for want of proper precautions. Remember, the pirates on this island are desperate men."

"True."

"Stay here," said Spirillo. "Don't venture further inland, and we shall see all the excitement that the greatest adventurer can desire."

"Very good."

"Be careful."

"I will."

"But, Spirillo," said Harry Girdwood, "one word."

"What is it?"

"If you go further and don't come back in twenty minutes from this time, we shall come and seek for you."

Spirillo smiled.

"Yes—but no," he added, suddenly growing serious, as an ugly thought crossed him; "if I don't return, you can guess what it means."

"No."

"Something will have happened to me; so that it will be madness for you to venture into danger. I must see that all is safe for you, my brave boys."

The two boys looked very serious at this speech.

"You don't suppose, Spirillo, that we could rest if we thought anything had happened to you. Pray return at once."

"I will not, but you must!" said the ex-pirate. "I am not going to have it upon my conscience, that I ran you into danger—you must promise me to obey."

They laughed.

"Well, remain here," said Spirillo, "or you may endanger the safety of the whole party." This settled the discussion at once.

"Very well, Spirillo," said young Jack, "we consent."

"You promise?"

"We do."

"Good," said Spirillo, apparently quite relieved by this.

Then his green back vanished, he disappeared at the two lads, shook them warmly, and he was gone.

Jack and Harry watched him in silence.

They saw him climbing up with very great difficulty, and they judged shrewdly that the place would be utterly inaccessible to an ordinary biped, but for the thick vegetation growing upon the slope, which gave the climber a hold for hand and foot.

And when he had reached the summit of the embankment, he turned, prior to plunging into the thick wood, and waved his hand in silence at his two young comrades.

"Good-by, old friend," said young Jack. "I hope you'll soon be back; I don't like you going alone on this job. We ought to share the danger."

"I do."

"He's gone!"

Spirillo waved a final farewell, and then he put his best leg foremost, and disappeared in the thicket.

Dear Spirillo.

They waited and watched in silence.

Their minds were filled with most unpleasant thoughts, and they did not care to impart them to each other.

They watched the thicket where Spirillo had disappeared, and all their eyes were fixed on it.

"Yes."

"I don't hear."

"What?"

"A noise from the thicket."

"No."

"I thought I did, but it was my fancy, perhaps."

"Must have been."

"Hark! was that?"

"No; what I heard, or what I fancied I heard, was like a groan."

"A groan?"

"A groan."

"I don't hear," said young Jack, looking at his watch.

"I don't hear," said young Jack, looking at his watch.

could see how fiercely strung his nerves were under the present excitement.

"Jack!"

"Halloo, sir."

"Tell Spirillo that I want him," Harkaway senior said; "ask him to come here."

"I can't; he's gone."

"Gone?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Gone up the heights there to reconnoiter."

Harkaway made his way ashore, and joined the two lads at this.

"Yes."

"That's very imprudent," he said, "very."

"I wished to join him, but—"

"You?" ejaculated Harkaway, aghast.

"Yes."

"You dare to, young—young jackanapes. You think to throw us all into a fever of nervousness and I—"

"Yes, you."

"Indeed, I never thought anything of the kind, father."

"Nor of anything," sighed the elder Harkaway. "Your great fault, my son, is just that."

"What, sir?"

"Thoughtlessness; but now listen seriously to me—you, too, Harry."

"Yes, sir."

"I wish you both thoroughly to understand that you are not to venture out of sight, or to court unnecessary danger."

"That is all right, and out of danger," said young Jack to his father and Harry.

"There—there," said Harkaway, "I only want you to promise me that you will be prudent."

"We will."

"Yes—yes," said Harry and young Jack.

"Good—good," said the elder Harkaway.

"Where, indeed?"

"They were destined to ask each other that question pretty often."

"An hour passed away."

An hour from the time that Spirillo had pushed his way into the thickly-wooded summit of the heights.

Yet no signs of him.

Jack Harkaway got to be very uneasy indeed.

So he went on board and consulted with the assembled party—the two lads joining them for the purpose.

And when young Jack had related all the circumstances of the case, they all pulled long faces.

"Something had happened to the pirate and his crew."

"There is one way of accounting for it," said Daniel Pike, "a way that no one has thought of yet."

"What?"

"Spirillo is a pirate, and a pirate is always a coward."

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"What?"

"Spirillo is a pirate, and a pirate is always a coward."

caped with him and the two boys from the pirate junk.

Now, just then the meeting was joined by an unexpected visitor.

Nero.

Young Jack's monkey had also been on an exploring expedition, and he had just returned without anything to show for it.

"Halloo!" cried Ben Hawser, coming up with a scrape and a tug at his forelock. "Blow me if he ain't got a hat."

It was true.

Nero had managed to get a hat from somewhere, and this Ben Hawser took from him.

"Well, wherever he has been, he has come across some human beings."

"That's true."

"Stop!" cried the American doctor, growing strangely excited now. "Give it to me."

Ben obeyed.

"Hah! I thought so," said the doctor.

"What?"

"This hat is the pirate Spirillo's; it is the hat he wore when he left here."

And then, looking about to assure himself that none of the ladies were within hearing, he sank his voice to a whisper and said:

"Do you see that?"

"What?"

"Blood! The hat is stained with blood. It is Spirillo's."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE END OF SPIRILLO.

STAINED with blood. An uncomfortable thrill went through the whole assemblage.

"Nero—Nero," cried young Jack, piteously, "what have you seen?"

"Why can't you talk for once?"

"Talk," echoed Ben Hawser; "he can talk fast enough if he likes, only he's afraid he'd have to work. Darn his artful carcass."

"Something has happened to Spirillo," said the doctor. "This is clear."

Young Jack and Harry Greenwood exchanged glances.

They thought of Spirillo's parting words.

"What's to be done?" asked Jefferson.

"Mount the heights with our revolvers in hand."

"That is very dangerous," said the doctor.

"Why?"

"They have such splendid cover, that they could pick us off one by one before we could get to the top."

"Or even get the satisfaction of a shot in return," said Magog Brand.

"This is a case calling for Indian warfare, for a trusty scout, who could creep upon this hidden enemy without being seen."

"Dat's me."

They all instinctively turned around, as our old friend the Prince of Limbi stepped forward.

"Monday."

"Yes, gentlemen. We'll see if we can't make my old savage life of some use once more."

"What do you propose?" demanded Harvey.

"I shall find my way a-top of dem hills—but not as Spirillo went; I shall go in de grass."

"The grass?"

"The grass!"

"I shall go in de grass, I say, like a snake—like a serpent, and if I find anything in my way, I shall sting like a serpent."

Saying which, he took out a short axe he carried under his waistcoat, and made a vicious dig with it.

Thoroughly civilized as he was, the prospect of going on the war-path aroused all his old savage instincts.

Harkaway looked around at the company.

"What do you say?"

"Monday's the man!" said Jefferson.

"Right."

And so it was unanimously voted that Monday should be accepted.

The Prince of Limbi cut off part of his clothing, and carried several weapons about his person.

They watched his progress in great anxiety.

Now, Monday did not scale the heights as Spirillo had done.

He went by a circuitous route to the point reached by the pirate.

And then he waited.

A young man it was.

Now, Monday's appearance was different from that of the pirate.

He was dressed in a simple, but comfortable, manner.

He was a young man, and his appearance was different from that of the pirate.

He was a young man, and his appearance was different from that of the pirate.

said Harkaway, unable to bear the silence any longer.

"Patience—patience," said the doctor; "we do not know yet."

"I, for one, have too much confidence in Monday to believe that, until I learn the worst."

"Wait."

"If harm should have befallen him, there will be but one course open to us."

"And that is?"

"To mount the heights in force, and clear the wood. We must not be cut off one by one without so much as—"

"Ha!"

"What now?"

"I can see a something crawling along there," said Magog Brand, who was looking through a telescope.

"Up above?"

"Yes."

"Is it Monday?"

"It is—it is! See—"

"He makes a sign to us!"

"Thank Heaven for that!" exclaimed Harkaway, fervently.

"He's not hurt?" exclaimed Mr. Jefferson, full of anxiety.

"No—no."

"Thank goodness for that, say I."

"As far as I can see, at least."

"Where is he now?"

"Coming this way."

"He is crawling on his stomach," returned Mr. Jefferson, "to keep out of sight."

This proved to be the case, for as soon as Monday got clear of the thick growth of shrubs, he started off at a run, and soon rejoined his party.

"Well, Monday," they exclaimed, in great excitement, "what have you seen?"

"Bad—bad!" he answered, shaking his head.

"How bad?"

"Dreadful!" answered Monday, shaking his head.

He showed clearly enough by his manner that he had seen something which had considerably upset him.

"What is it, Monday? Why don't you speak?"

"Come, out with it."

"Have you seen Spirillo?"

Monday nodded gravely.

"You have seen him?" said Harkaway, eagerly.

"Then he is a prisoner, I suppose?" said Dick.

"No—no prisoner. I have seen him, or part of him."

They stared again at this.

"What do you mean by that? What part of him?"

Monday's reply was brief, characteristic, and very terrible.

"I have seen Spirillo's head stuck on a pole."

They shuddered.

They wanted no further explanation, for it told its own tale.

Poor Spirillo.

He had been full of warnings for them about the dangers of the enterprise, and he had been the first to slight his own warnings.

And fatally had he paid the penalty of his rashness.

"I leave Spirillo's head on the pole," exclaimed Monday, quietly, "until I can find it again, and put in the place the head of the man that did it."

"Mind you do not lose yours, Monday," said Dick.

Monday laughed at this.

"No fear of dat, Massa Dick. I shall have the fellow's head before we leave Magic Island."

Would he?

He looked very confident as he spoke, but his hidden enemy was as crafty as an owl.

Whether Monday carried out his threat or not would show.

CHAPTER XIV.

A BRACE OF VILLAINS—THE STORM AND ITS RANGERS—A BIRD CALAMITY—THE JIM AND HIS LEGEND.

WHEN Harkaway made his will, and for the first time resolved to resign his life, he was in a state of mind that was not very different from that of the pirate.

The Indian villain knew that his life was in danger, and he was the only one who knew that fact.

There were some fragments of a legend in the boat.

Two men had joined these fragments, and they had prepared for a good throw.

The two men were the same as the two men who had been in the boat.

Harkaway had been in the boat, and he had been in the boat.

He had been in the boat, and he had been in the boat.

He had been in the boat, and he had been in the boat.

But by the time Toro managed to drag him over the gunwale, he was insensible, nor did he regain consciousness till an hour had elapsed.

When his senses once more returned, he began to arrange matters as well as he could for their perilous voyage.

Oars or sail they had not, but in the bottom of the boat were three or four rough planks, two of which they carved with their knives, into rude oars, while of another they formed a kind of mast.

The sail was made of a canvas bag, in which their store of biscuit had been placed.

With these rude contrivances, they found they could guide their craft, and make some, though slow progress.

Two days passed.

Upon the third day, towards sundown, black and threatening clouds fringed the horizon. The wind came in fitful gusts, moaning dismally as it crossed the weary waste of inky waters.

"We are in for dirty weather," said Hunston. "You had better rest, Toro."

"What for?"

"Because you will have need of all your strength and endurance this night."

"And you?"

"Oh, I have slept this afternoon," replied Hunston, "whereas you haven't closed your eyes since last night, and it is no joke passing the night without sleeping."

"Do you think there is any chance of that?" asked Toro.

"I do."

"Humph!"

"Take in the sail, Toro," said his companion.

"Must I?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps you are right," said Toro.

So he set to work to reef the sail which had been hurriedly rigged the day before.

This done, Hunston prevailed upon his companion to try and snatch a few hours' sleep in order to brace himself up for a possible night of weary and anxious vigil.

The huge Italian stretched out his arms and yawned, and then coiled himself up.

"I shall never be able to sleep," he said.

But barely were the words uttered when he dropped off into a deep slumber—and snored.

And while he snored, he dreamt of fair countries—of lands flowing with milk and honey.

And he seemed in his dream to recollect having been set adrift in a boat on the dreary ocean, with Hunston, and he thought that he was comparing his present lot in life with that dreary time!

Pity that he should ever be interrupted in such pleasant visions.

* * * * *

"Toro!"

"Ugh!"

"Toro—Toro! wake up, I say!"

"What is it?"

"Out with your oars—quick! Pull, man—pull!"

The Italian opened his eyes, and blinked and winked and stared stupidly about him, before he could realize the situation.

It was indeed a sad awakening.

"What now?" he growled. "What's the use of asking me to go to sleep, if you want to disturb me at once?"

"You have been asleep two hours, Toro."

"Two minutes!"

"Two hours, I say—more than two hours, I swear! The gale has increased, and now we want your strength and your skill both to save us."

While Hunston was speaking, the Italian looked about him and began to understand.

It was high time.

The gale had increased, until it assumed a really alarming aspect.

Hugh waves broke over the boat in a way that seriously threatened its safety.

They shipped heavy seas more than once, and it needed all Hunston's prompt attention to bale out the water fast enough to keep them afloat.

"Lower your oars!" cried Hunston, eagerly.

Toro obeyed.

"Now take the word from me," he said. "When I give the word, pull for your life."

Toro looked up, wide awake, when Hunston gave the signal of danger.

"We mustn't let another of those waves break over us, or we are lost. Do you understand?" said Hunston.

"Yes."

"Now, then!"

"Ready!"

In spite of the darkness of the night, Hunston could see the huge hill of water slowly rolling on

in pursuit of them, and threatening to engulf the boat and its living freight.

It was a very mountain, and let this break over their boat, there would be a speedy and awful end to their plotting and scheming, and their criminal career.

Hunston watched it draw nearer and nearer, and then, picking well his moment, he gave Toro the signal.

"Pull!"

The oars struck the water.

"Pull—pull, man!" he exclaimed earnestly. "Pull, for the love of Heaven, or we are dead men!"

Toro obeyed.

Three or four desperate strokes jerked the boat along before the threatening wave, so that, finding no opposition to its march, it simply helped the boat with it, and the danger was past.

The danger for the moment, we would say.

The perils of a fearful night were yet before them.

These bold, bad men—these scoffers at everything good and righteous—could invoke divine help, you may see, in their hour of great trouble.

There is nothing so calculated to fill the heart with awesome feelings, to show man what a helpless atom he is.

* * * * *

"Now again!"

"Right!"

"Pull—pull for your life!"

A desperate tug at the oars shot the boat through the water before the advancing wave.

Yet, dexterously as the movement was effected, they were well-nigh swamped.

The rain came down.

Drenched to the skin with the blinding rain, and sitting knee deep in the water—bale it out as fast as they would—they shivered like palsy-stricken wretches.

"There's an ague in this for me," said Toro, his teeth chattering as he spoke.

"Rheumatic fever for me," groaned Hunston.

"Here it comes again."

"Pull then, both together! take the time sharply—now!"

"Right!"

And pull together they did, with a vengeance. The wave rolled its inky crest under the boat's stern, lifting them high aloft.

Saved again!

Saved by their indomitable perseverance and skill of no mean order.

Indeed, both were possessed of gifts which might have achieved for them great things in life, had they turned those abilities to good account.

Well, so they passed through that dismal night, and when morning dawned, it found them both well-nigh exhausted with fatigue—with white, wan faces, and eyes sunken in their sockets in spite of their frequent recourse to their flasks of spirits to keep up their circulation and their courage.

And Hunston looked about to ascertain if the gale had done them any damage.

"No harm done?"

"Not much."

"I thought not," said Toro. "We're precious lucky."

"Yes; if you can call it luck to be able to protect yourself, instead of sitting down and giving way as some men would have done, for we took every possible precaution to secure our provisions and the like."

"We did."

"And—halloo!"

Hunston paused, and looked hastily about him. He lifted the tarpaulin from off some object at the bottom of the boat.

But then he looked in vain.

"What is it?"

Toro looked full of impatience as he put the question.

"What now?"

"Wait."

"Wait, why don't you answer?"

"I'll tell you," answered Hunston, "though you need not be so impatient and so eager to hear bad news."

"Bad news?"

"Yes."

"What news?"

Hunston gave a final glance about him.

And then he told in hollow tones, the dire calamity which had befallen them.

"The keg of water has been washed overboard!"

Toro said nothing.

But as he sank back in his seat, the look of unutterable dismay upon his countenance showed that he realized the full extent of this great calamity.

"Are you sure?" was all he could falter, presently.

Hunston nodded.

"Sure. I was looking for it for some minutes before I spoke. My arm has been very painful; the strain upon it in pulling has been too much for it, I suppose. I thought that I would try what cold water bathing would do for it. I know it is gone."

"That is a dreadful thing, Hunston."

"It is, indeed."

"Your arm getting bad, too," said the Italian, reflectively. "Shall I look at it?"

"Yes, do."

"Probably there is something out of order with the machinery."

"Perhaps."

Hunston started involuntarily as he spoke.

Instinctively he remembered the murdered inventor of the mechanical arm.

The hapless Robert Emmerson.

He thought of the legend on the arm itself:

"FOES, BEWARE ME; BUT WOE TO THE WEARER IF RAISED AGAINST A FRIEND."

He thought of the murdered man's dying words.

Indeed, they were ringing in his ears night and day.

He heard them ever as plainly as when he saw the unhappy Emmerson dying before him.

He felt, too, that he was yet to be punished through that arm with its menacing legend.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HORRORS OF SHIPWRECK—A FEARFUL FRAY.

NEITHER Hunston nor Toro realized the full extent of their calamity at first.

They were by no means ignorant of the value of fresh water in their position.

But being barely out of the greatest possible danger, their minds were in a great degree occupied by other matters, and they did not think of the great trouble which had overtaken them.

The trouble would soon make itself felt.

A pang was felt by Hunston, and for this reason, he had an unpleasant reminder in that afflicted member whereon hung Emmerson's masterpiece of mechanism.

This shot and twinged unpleasantly from time to time, and Hunston would have given much for a little cold fresh water to bathe it with.

"I am thirsty," said Toro presently. "Where is the water?"

"Overboard."

Toro started.

"Yes—yes, I understand; there is plenty overboard, as you say—plenty of water."

"You don't understand," returned Hunston.

"What I told you was that the keg of fresh water has gone overboard in the gale."

"But have we none left on board?"

"No."

"Then we are lost," cried the Italian.

"Lost!"

"Lost, unless a passing vessel picks us up to-day or to-morrow."

"Small chance of that," said Hunston gloomily.

"Well, who's responsible for getting us in this mess—that's what I ask?" cried the giant Toro.

"Am I?"

"Of course."

"It is a lie!" said Hunston.

"Did I strike the blow?" cried Toro.

"What has that to do with the matter? We agreed that the boy should die."

"Harkaway's brat, you mean."

"I do."

"Well."

"Well, then, Emmerson opposed us; he would have pushed matters to extremes, and he fell as others have fallen before. If the same squabble occurred again, I should do the same again probably. Still, Toro, I will confess that I regret that blow—I regret Robert Emmerson's death more than any act of my life—"

He stopped short as his arm gave him a twinge.

An expression of pain deepened on his face, as the pain increased, and in spite of his efforts to restrain it, a deep groan escaped his lips.

Toro looked on, while strange reflections passed through his mind.

What if Robert Emmerson's work should be poisoned?

It was just possible, indeed, he thought, but he kept the thought to himself.

The pain which Hunston now experienced, was no passing annoyance.

The paroxysms commenced with a faint and sickening sensation, and grew gradually more and more unbearable, as the suffering man's face clearly indicated.

"What," thought the Italian, as he watched his companion, "what if it should be the beginning of mortification?"

How strange!

The same thought had entered Hunston's mind.

But he resolutely thrust back the unwelcome fancy. It could not be.

No.

He had dwelt upon the death of his late comrade Robert Emmerson, until his mind grew filled with all kinds of ugly thoughts.

He would no longer allow himself to be tormented with such idle whims.

But the same thought would ever return.

* * *

Many hours passed.

They had all they could desire to satisfy their hunger, but they could not quench their thirst.

And soon they began to suffer most acutely.

Yet they did not like to acknowledge it.

If the truth be told, they did not like even to acknowledge it to themselves.

It was an evil conviction, which they tried to ward off as long as possible.

As for Hunston, his bad arm grew worse rapidly, and having no means at hand for tending it, the fever increased, and soon his whole body was parched with it.

His throat was dry as parchment, and then, in spite of all he could do, the fearful truth would force itself upon his notice.

They were about to suffer all the horrors of death at sea in an open boat.

They vented their feelings in cursing their late comrades.

They wished them to be assailed by all the ills of mortality at once, and finally to perish in the most miserable manner.

These two wretched men worked themselves up into a perfect frenzy over the thoughts of their enemies, and when they had lashed themselves into a perfect fury, they fell foul of each other.

In the midst of the squabble another small keg fell overboard.

It contained meat, and for a minute it floated adrift.

"We mustn't lose that," ejaculated Toro.

"What's to be done?"

"I'm after it."

And as he spoke, the Italian cast off his coat and hat, and dived into the water.

His action was so sudden that Hunston was taken by surprise.

His first impulse was to pull away from the spot, and leave his friend Toro to perish.

"It is his life or mine," said Hunston to himself. "He might get the best of a squabble, if it came to that."

So he pulled sharply for four or five strokes.

Then his arm pained him so excessively that he was forced to stop, and as he shipped his oars, he perceived Toro rise to the surface, with the keg.

Toro managed to push it on before him as he swam after the boat.

Hunston looked at his comrade earnestly, and as he looked, murderous thoughts took possession of him.

But this was all.

It went no further than thoughts.

As he looked, reflections came of the "for and against" in this matter.

If Toro perished now, it would leave him master of the boat and its contents, it was true, but it would also leave him alone.

Alone.

The very sound of the word was dreadful to him.

And so the temptation to leave his comrade to perish miserably was abandoned from purely selfish motives.

He could not do without him, at present.

Instead of knocking him on the head with the oar, he stretched it for him to rest upon.

"Push the keg nearer to me," he said.

"Phew, pooh!" spluttered the Italian. "It has taken all my wind away."

Hunston lifted the keg into the boat.

"I could put an end to him now if I wished," he thought to himself.

Could the swimmer have known how his chances trembled on the balance just then, he would scarcely have felt so comfortable.

He wavered.

Toro held out his hand for help, and Hunston assisted him to scramble into the boat.

"That was a precious hard swim, *cara mio*," said the Italian, shaking the water from his hair, "quite a breather—but it was worth the venture."

"It was."

"But for more reasons than one," remarked Toro.

"What other reason could there be?" asked Hunston.

"It has refreshed my body completely, and cured my thirst."

"Indeed."

"Ay, that it has."

"I wish it would cure mine," said his companion.

"I'll warrant you it would," said Toro.

"Then I'll—"

He stopped short.

An ugly thought crossed him.

What if Toro should be seized with fancies similar to those that he had had?

No!

This would not do. He had better not throw temptation away.

And as these fancies flitted through his mind, he could not help reflecting how glad he would have been to bathe his fevered body.

Such was the nature of the bond of crime which united these two guilty wretches, that there was nothing approaching confidence between them. They could never trust each other after all those long years of companionship.

* * *

Morning came.

The broiling sun scorched them up, and what with fatigue and thirst, they were in a truly pitiable spirit.

With haggard faces and staring eyes they sat facing each other, supporting with what patience they could, the torments of thirst.

The silence at length became unbearable.

"Toro," said Hunston, in hollow tones, "I suppose you have read of shipwrecks?"

"I have," returned his companion in much the same strain.

"And you have read of all the horrors that are experienced by miserable wretches in our condition."

"Yes."

"Why, men have been known to seek each others' lives for food."

"Food."

"Ay."

"What do you mean?"

"Mean? Why, that hunger, despair, madness, have made men cannibals."

"Horrible!"

"Well—well," said Hunston, with a sickly look, "we have not come to that yet, for our stock of food holds bravely out, and we are not likely to lose our reason. The burning, killing thirst that is upon us—"

"What of it?"

"Nothing."

"Of course. How could the death of one or other of us advantage the survivor?"

"Not at all," was the reply. "We could not well drink each other's blood!"

It was an unlucky speech.

Barely had the words been spoken ere he would have given much to recall them.

But it could not be.

They were spoken, and do what he would, they could not be recalled.

But they rang in Toro's ears for many a long hour after, and when he felt the horrible pangs upon him, the terrible reflection came that if his companion lay dead at his feet, it meant a day's more life for him.

And Hunston!

What thought he!

His guilty mind was ever full of such fearful fancies, strive as he would to drive them back.

And now their food remained untouched beside them.

The all-devouring thirst absorbed their thoughts, and they thought only of ministering to it.

* * *

Night came, and they both sank back in the boat asleep.

But their slumbers were fitful, and broken intermittingly.

Towards daybreak, Hunston awoke from his restless sleep, dreaming the most horrible things about the last and most dreadful episode of crime in his guilty life—the murder of Robert Emmerson, and as he opened his eyes, he saw a dark figure bending over him.

He saw that a knife was held over him, and seeing this, he was wide awake immediately.

"Toro!" he cried.

"Hah!" cried the Italian. "You're awake."

"Yes. Stand off."

"Hunston," hissed his companion in his ear, "the time has come that you or I must die; the chance is mine. Die!"

And so saying, he struck downwards a fearful blow.

But Hunston jerked himself aside, and the Italian's knife penetrated deeply into the seat whereon Hunston had been resting.

Then, before Toro could get it free, the Englishman grasped his weapon, and was upon the defensive.

By dint of a desperate effort, he raised himself up to the Italian's level.

"You're wrong!" he cried, in the same mad manner; "it is my turn, and you, Toro, shall die."

And Hunston dug fiercely at Toro.

The blow took effect, but not fatally, in the latter's shoulder.

This blow served to bring Toro to a full sense of his danger.

Quickly recovering himself, the giant sprang back and faced his adversary.

"Hunston," said he, slowly, "you'll never live to repeat that blow."

And he bound his knife in his hand with his handkerchief, as he spoke, his fierce eyes being fixed all the while upon his comrade and adversary.

"It is your life or mine," said Hunston.

"Your life or mine," returned Toro.

And the two men alone in that small boat, on murder bent, fell knife in hand upon each other.

CHAPTER XVI.

MAGIC ISLAND AGAIN—THE EXPEDITION—A BRACE OF SCOUTS AND BEN HAWSER'S ADVANCED GUARD—NERO MAKES AN ALARMING DISCOVERY.

To return to Fairy Creek and the Harkaways again.

The news that Monday brought back from his excursion cast a gloom over the whole party.

This may be readily understood.

Spirillo had been a very loose character in by-gone days beyond all doubt—they had it, in point of fact, upon his own admission—but his conduct since he had been with his new-found friends was irreproachable.

Poor Spirillo!

He had just lived to bring them to his reputed El Dorado—this isle of Monte Christo—and then he had met his doom.

He had made himself highly popular with the whole of the party, and now his loss was most keenly felt.

* * *

"Jefferson," said Harkaway, to the big American, "we have a duty to perform over this."

"We have," returned Jefferson, significantly.

"I mean we must not let this go unpunished."

"Not if we are men," replied Jefferson.

"This Monastos must suffer for it."

"He shall."

"And as there is no time like the present," said Harkaway, "I propose that an expedition should start at once."

"Now? Give the orders then."

"No; you give the orders, Jefferson; I'll call the ladies to say good-by for the present."

"As you please, Harkaway," replied Jefferson; "although I should have preferred your taking the command at once. But stay."

"What now?"

"Not a word to the ladies."

"Of what?"

"Spirillo."

Harkaway shuddered.

"Of course not," he replied. "We should leave them in a desperate state of mind to no purpose."

"I question if we should leave them at all," said Jefferson; "they wouldn't listen to our going if they only knew what had occurred."

"Where is Harvey?"

"Close by; he was here just now—Harvey!"

"Halloo!" replied Dick, from the deck of the vessel.

He had gone back on board to get away from the long faces and heavy hearts about since the sad fate of poor Spirillo had been ascertained.

"Here, Dick!" shouted Jack Harkaway.

"Want me?"

"Yes."

"I'm there."

"We are about starting to discover the retreat of Monastos, the pirate."

"When do we start?"

"In a few minutes."

"Good; I'm ready."

"Call the men together, then."

* * *

And so within an hour from that time, the party started.

It was carried out in this manner:

Monday and his comrade, Caesar Hannibal, both armed to the teeth, crept forward, observing the same tactics as the former had already carried out so successfully.

"Now," said Harkaway, seriously, to his two trusty darkies, "you must get off—turn to the left or the right, so that each of you will scour one side of the heights above the ravine."

"Yes, sar."

"There must be no imprudence—no rashness."

"No, sar."

"Trust me, Master Harkaway," said Monday.

"Oh, yes, sar—you can trust Monday," said the other darkie sily; "he'll neber get into danger."

The bystanders grinned a bit at this dig.

This insinuation nettled Monday to the quick. So he retorted with great asperity.

"As for Sunday, sar, you couldn't have a better man for dis sarvice."

"Glad to hear it."

"That's generous," laughed Dick Harvey.

"Decidedly," said Magog Brand.

"Oh, yes, sar," continued the Prince of Limbi, "Sunday awful cautious man—'fraid of his own ugly shadder."

"Ha—ha—ha!" laughed the bystanders, while poor Sunday was furious.

"Now, then," said Harkaway, "no quarreling between yourselves. I know you have both courage, and I know that you need it now, for, my good friends, you have the honor of the most dangerous place in the expedition; and after poor Spirillo's fate, it shows no ordinary courage in you to accept the post of scouts."

"Hear—hear!" from Harvey.

"Very true, indeed," said Mr. Jefferson.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Mr. Brand; "bravo, both of you!"

The two darkies bowed their thanks, and while Monday grinned, and showed his teeth with pleasure, Sunday swelled out his chest, and strutted like a bantam cock.

"What we want is prudence," said Harkaway.

"The safety of the whole expedition is in your hands, it may be, and there must be no blundering the job."

"You may rely on me, Mr. Harkaway, sar," said Monday.

"I know it."

"And me, too," exclaimed Sunday, quickly.

"I believe you. Now, then, off with you. Your arms are all right!"

"Yes."

"Don't trust too much to your pistols, they make a noise."

"And miss fire occasionally," said Ben Hawser, stepping forward. "There's nothing like dropping them a good one on the nose—a peppy one, straight from the shoulder."

"I've a surer friend," said Monday.

"Where?"

"Here—surer and quieter."

So saying, he drew his knife, a murderous-looking weapon, with a blade twelve inches long, and a hollowed handle that the hand fitted well into.

He was the wild Indian once more.

He looked, indeed, as though he had a foe under that knife.

"I pity the skunk who gets in the way of Monday's toothpick," said Mr. Jefferson in an undertone to Magog Brand.

"So do I."

* * * * *

They were gone.

Signals were arranged between the scouts and the main body, and every precaution taken, and then Jefferson, Harkaway, and Dick Harvey set about getting the whole body in order, to march through the ravine.

And now all was ready.

They only waited for the signals from above.

Presently they heard two distinct bird calls from the heights above, at not more than a minute's interval between them.

"Now."

"Stop, your honor," exclaimed Ben Hawser, running forward.

"What now?"

"Who is to serve as scout for the main body?"

"I don't understand you," was Jack's reply.

"Why, I can propose a scout—an advanced guard that'll beat all the darkies in the world in discretion."

"Where is he?"

"Here."

He whistled shrilly two or three times, and then a little shaggy Scotch terrier came bounding up.

"Good Mike," said Ben, "brave Mike; look how fond he is of his old daddy."

The little dog seemed as though he could devour his master with gratitude at being taken notice of.

"Now, Mike," said Ben Hawser, holding the dog in his left arm and admonishing him with his right forefinger, "now you'll have to run on ahead and smell out anybody skulking about; do you hear?"

The dog replied with a whine of intelligence.

"Now call him, your honor," said Ben.

"Come, Mike," said Jack.

Mike looked wistfully around at his master.

"Go on, that's your cap'en now."

Off they started, Mike leading.

And so they pushed through the ravine.

* * * * *

In the meantime, Nero had scrambled up on the heights after Monday.

The latter had, however, got such a start of Nero that he had some difficulty in finding him, and so he climbed into a tree; then he saw crouching beneath him a dark-visaged man who was peering through the thickly-grown shrubs upon the party passing beneath.

Nero saw, too, that this man was nervously grasping a rifle which he was about to bring to his shoulder, his intended target being the heart of Jack Harkaway the elder.

CHAPTER XVII.

PIONEER MIKE HEADS THE PARTY—MONDAY ON THE WAR-PATH—THE FIGHT IN THE THICKET.

MIKE strutted before the party with an air of dignity, as if conscious of the importance of his position.

He was not a majestic terrier, strictly speaking.

Yet now he felt that he had the safety of the party upon his shoulders, and presently, when about half the distance of the passage through the ravine had been traversed, Mike stopped short, and pricked up his ears; and then he sniffed about uneasily, while a low, ominous growl escaped him.

It was startling.

Not a word was spoken, but each member of the party instinctively grasped his weapons.

On guard.

Scarcely an inch of the ground was unwatched by those wary adventurers.

Not a word was spoken.

Suddenly there was a noise in the shrubs overhanging the right cliff, then a crash of breaking twigs and branches, and something whizzed through the air, and fell at the feet of Magog Brand.

It was a rifle.

The little man popped his foot upon it, and placing his own piece to his shoulder, he pointed it straight up at the spot whence the rifle had, apparently, fallen.

He was not alone in his movement.

A dozen rifles were pointed at the same spot in a trice.

"Forward!" exclaimed Jack Harkaway, promptly; "this may be an ambush; we musn't be shot here like pigeons out of the traps. Bring on the rifle with you; forward!"

"One moment," said Magog Brand. "Mike has proved himself king of scouts; let him go on ahead."

"Right."

"Good dog," said Jefferson; "clear the way, Mike, and you shall have the choicest bit of our first meal."

"I second that," cried Dick Harvey, laughing.

"Bravo, Mike! good dog."

With ears erect, and mobile tail, Mike marched on, and so the procession marched safely through the ravine, and through the threatening danger.

* * * * *

We have stated that Nero followed Monday up the heights.

Now Monday's quick ear caught the sound of Nero clambering through the branches of the trees to his perch—for Nero was almost as big as a man—and not dreaming it was his monkey friend, Monday took out his long knife, and looked about him.

After listening intently, while he discovered the direction whence the sounds came, he made that way.

Creeping through the thicket with the greatest caution, he was suddenly brought to a standstill by receiving a smart crack on the head.

A cocoonut fell at his feet.

"Halloo!" thought Monday, "that's somebody pelting me with nuts, and he's almost cracked mine."

But he was silent.

He simply rubbed the damaged part of his head.

And then he looked sharply about him for another.

It was not long in coming.

But forewarned, forearmed.

He dodged it with considerable agility.

In getting out of harm's way his eye dropped upon Nero up aloft.

There he was, squatting on a branch, and gathering such missiles as were within reach.

One he had in his hand ready for another shy.

But Monday was surprised to find that he was not the target this time.

There was something almost immediately underneath that apparently excited his attention more than all else.

Monday crept forward on all fours, and there he perceived the body of a man stretched upon the ground.

He also perceived that this man was leaning over the edge of a precipice.

Holding his knife in his teeth by the blade, Monday crawled on.

The man in front, unsuspecting danger to himself, had just raised his rifle to his shoulder, pointed to Harkaway down the precipice.

Monday still crawled on; then he heard the measured tramp of the party passing through the ravine.

A thousand dreadful fears flashed in an instant through his mind.

Not ten minutes before he had given the signal that all was safe for the march through the ravine.

All this was but the reflection of a moment.

Before he had time to advance another foot, Nero dropped from his perch on to the next lower branch.

Then he dropped another step, and plumped upon the back of the man overhanging the precipice.

The man gave a yell and dropped the rifle over the cliff.

The man, frightened at the noise, sprang up and scrambled—slipped—fell over.

Monday looked on surprised.

But soon recovering himself, he crawled up to the edge and looked over, expecting to see the body of the unlucky wretch writhing beneath.

But what was his surprise to discover that he had not fallen more than three feet?

Just beneath them was a wide ledge of land, upon which he had fallen, and contrived to stop himself from rolling further.

Now just as Monday looked over, the man had recovered his balance, and was scrambling into the thicket.

Monday watched his progress.

Then glancing over to the party below, he crawled back and went in pursuit of the pirate who had had such a lucky escape.

"He hasn't seen me," said Monday, to himself, "so I have all the advantage."

He crept on.

Softly he made his way after the other, full of hope of discovering something which would prove of use to his party.

The Prince of Limbi chuckled when he thought how his success would give him a signal triumph over his African rival, Sunday.

Now barely had this fancy crossed him when he made a very unpleasant discovery.

He had lost the scent.

But he did not give it up yet.

Crawling on, he made his way with more speed than ever.

But only for awhile.

Then he pulled up and grew wiser.

He got clear of the thick growth, and then he bent his head to the ground, peering about him like a bloodhound.

He had struck the trail.

He looked to his weapons and went on—on—on.

Soon he was within sight of an opening, from whence started three foot tracks through the dense growth of trees and shrubs, and at the point to which these tracks converged stood a ghastly object—a human head upon a pole that stuck in the ground.

Monday paused.

The recollection of that awful sight made him feel uncomfortable, and he did not relish the thought of facing it again.

But in these things there is a fearful fascination, while they horrify, and he could not refrain from peering through the shrubs for a glance at the dreadful object.

And then judge of his surprise, when he discovered that the opening was already occupied by another.

Yes!

There was the very man he sought.

The object of his pursuit.

And this man was in the act of venting his

spleen upon that poor, helpless fragment of a man that had so very recently been full of life and vigor, the head of Spirillo.

Monday could not understand his words.

The pirate was expressing his contempt for Spirillo, and threatening him with all kinds of indignities.

The ruffian concluded a regular tirade of invectives by spitting upon the ghastly object on the pole.

"You shall pay for that," said Monday, to himself.

And he set to work.

He crept around through the thick shrubs, and stealing a march thus upon the unscrupulous ruffian, who had not known how to respect a valiant enemy, he suddenly faced him.

"I have you now," said Monday; "and you shall die for this."

"Caramba!" ejaculated the man, thus discovered.

He stood facing Monday for a second or so, fixed to the spot with surprise.

While he was thus spellbound, Monday took his knife in his left hand, and with the other he whipped out the short ax that he had stuck handy in his belt.

The pirate fell back.

Then silently drew his knife.

Monday crept on, slowly, cautiously and stealthily.

Crept as a cat does on a mouse.

The other retreated slowly—backwards—facing the foe.

Monday was sure of his victim, so he thought, and his face was illuminated with a vicious and triumphant smile.

Suddenly the pirate gave a strange cry, turned around, and plunged into the thicket.

He disappeared.

Yes, he was gone.

Monday gave a cry of utter rage and disgust.

Then he dashed after him.

Bursting his way through the thick undergrowth, he pushed on, literally carving himself a passage with his ax.

The man turned quickly, with knife in hand,

but Monday, with his old Indian war shout, was upon him.

The next moment the man lay dead at his feet.

Monday stooped to look at his fallen foe, and was surprised to find he had killed, not the man he was in pursuit of, but one like him only in dress.

"Oh, ho," thought Monday, "there are more pirates about than one."

Suddenly he stopped short.

Something had struck him in the back.

A treacherous blow it was, too, and it seemed to poor Monday as though his spine had been seared with a red-hot iron.

Not a cry, not a murmur, not a sound escaped him.

Quick as a tiger upon his prey, the Prince of Limbi was around with his face to the enemy.

It was the man he was after.

He had stolen a march upon poor Monday, doubled, and stabbed him in the back.

Then, having delivered the blow, he would have disappeared again, but before he could get quite out of harm's way Monday hurled the ax at him with all his might.

A wild cry from the pirate told that it had taken effect.

Monday made a rush forward; but the other, in spite of his hurt, managed to dodge him.

In an instant he was gone.

Monday followed a little way, and having recovered his ax, which was blood-stained, he began to think of turning back.

A sickly feeling stole over him.

The wound in the back was beginning to tell, he knew.

"I must get to my party," thought the brave black, "or I shall be found, and decorate another pole beside poor Spirillo."

He turned faint, but drove this feeling back with fierce resolution, and pushed on.

Suddenly an arm was thrust out of the thicket; a hand with a gleaming knife in it was upraised, and down it came.

Just shaved.

He had seen it, had Monday, and slightly jerking himself aside, avoided the blow.

He turned then, with his old Limbian war-cry, and fell on the hidden enemy; chopping with such desperation with his ax, that there was a regular shower of splinters from the shrubs.

A hollow groan told, too, that he had struck something more than the bushes.

A moment more, and the enemy lay revealed, dead at his feet.

One doughty blow severed the unhappy wretch's head from his body.

"Now, sar, you are number two," said Monday, with a grim smile; "so me take down Spirillo, and put dis poll on de oder pole. Yah—yah!"

This worthy savage had dropped back half a lifetime in civilization, by simply returning to the instincts of his youth.

He was on the war path.

All was justifiable.

Dragging himself painfully along, and bearing the ghastly trophy with him, he reached the well-known opening to which converged the different paths through the thicket.

"Come down, Spirillo," said he, tenderly; "come down, old friend, and let me poke up in your place dis oder dam tief!"

And then he grew fainter and fainter.

A film spread over his eyes.

"I'm a gone coon—gone coon!" he faltered.

He sank upon the ground.

"My head will be here after all!" he murmured.

The thought gave him a moment's renewed strength.

So he jerked up, and whistled three times upon a small silver call he carried.

"Where dat nigger Sunday—why him not here now to help me?"

Then after a moment's pause:

"Massa Harkaway!" he faltered; "Jack—Massa Dick! Come—help—I die!"

And he sank back.

Then as he lost consciousness, two fierce eyes gleamed at him through the foliage, and a long, lank form crept stealthily out into the open.

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